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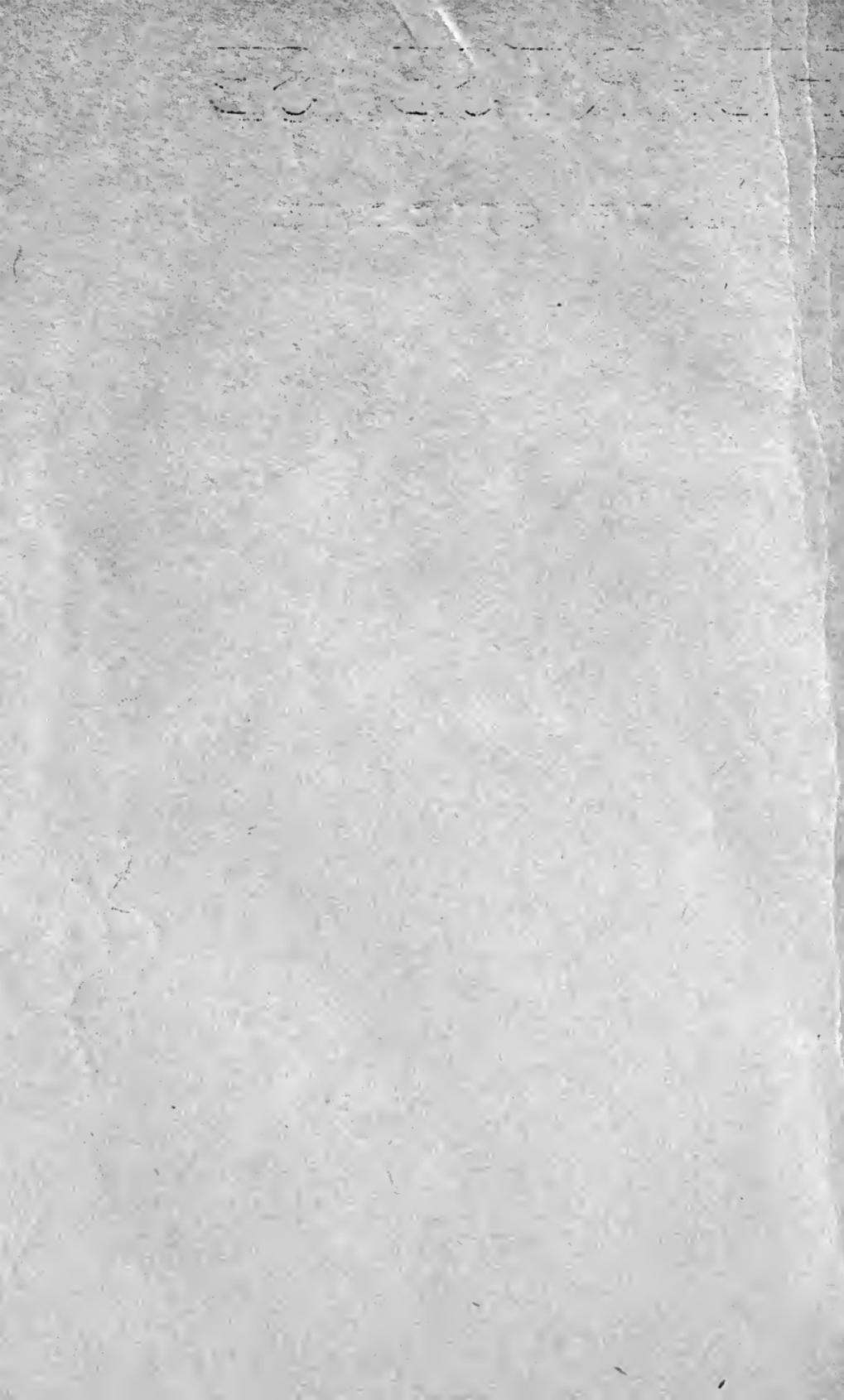
HEARTSEASE

BY

CHARLES KLEIN & J. I. C. CLARK



SAMUEL FRENCH, 28-30 West 38th St., New York



HEARTSEASE

A Play in Four Acts

By

CHARLES KLEIN & J. I. C. CLARK

Revised, 1916, by J. I. C. Clark

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Act of March 4, 1909.

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Aea
1916

HEARTSEASE.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

LORD NEVILLE
MAJOR TWOMBLEY
PADBURY
SIR GEOFFREY POMFRET
CAPTAIN O'HARA
DARVILLE
DOXTON
CHAIRMAN
QUIGG
LADY NEVILLE
MARGARET
ALICE TEMPLE
ERIC TEMPLE
LADY O'HARA

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HEARTSEASE

ACT I.

SCENE:—*Drawing-room at LORD NEVILLE'S. A sumptuously furnished apartment, style Louis XVI. Entrance c. at back. Entrance with portière, R. I E. Entrance L. 3 E., to conservatory. A small console L. C., and chair near it. Table R. C. with gong. Desk up R. with paper, quill-pen, and ink. Sofas, arm-chair, and other chairs. A cabinet stands L.*

DISCOVERED:—*LADY NEVILLE R. C. SIR GEOFFREY at mantel. MAJOR at table with two guests playing chess; MARGARET and LADY O'HARA seated on sofa to L. CAPT. O'HARA leaning over back of sofa.*

MAJOR. I protect my king.

GUEST. (SIR GEOFFREY) Bravo, Major!

LADY NEVILLE. (*Rings bell. Enter DOXTON c.*) Doxton, announce Mr. Temple the moment he arrives. (*Crosses to c.*)

SIR GEOFFREY. (*Coming down L. C. taking snuff*) Egad, 'tis come to a pretty pass; and how long must we wait upon this jingle maker?

LADY NEVILLE. Patience, cousin Geoffrey, whatever detains Mr. Temple, I'll wager 'tis unavoidable.

CAPT. O'HARA. (L.) That's true for you, Lady Neville.

SIR GEOFFREY. (*Leaning lazily against harpsichord*) Your Ladyship seems deeply interested in this Mr. Temple?

HEARTSEASE.

LADY NEVILLE. (*Affectedly*) Oh, no, I love—
music. (*Everybody laughs*)

SIR GEOFFREY. (L. C. *Aside to Lady Neville*) Your motive may be misconstrued. You discover this fellow, you make yourself known as his patroness. You give this musicale to exploit his genius, invite the impresario, Darville, draw Lord Neville blindfolded into your scheme. 'Gad, we're all made parties to your Ladyship's intrigues!

LADY NEVILLE. (*Indignantly*) Sir Geoffrey!

MAJOR. Mr. Temple has been delayed, no doubt.

SIR GEOFFREY. For my part, this delay is a pleasant one. We shall hear the less of the fellow's music.

MARGARET. Ah, Sir Geoffrey, like all musicians, you are professionally jealous.

SIR GEOFFREY. Scarcely that, since in music I am but an amateur.

CAPT. O'HARA. (*Coming down r.*) Egad, his music tells that louder than words. (*General laugh*)

SIR GEOFFREY. Ah, Temple's friend.

CAPT. O'HARA. I am, and whose friend are you?

MAJOR. Mine. (*Rising*)

LADY NEVILLE. So, so, my good Captain, you approve of Mr. Temple's music.

CAPT. O'HARA. (*Coming c.*) Many a time on the weary march, we have been made the happier for it.

LADY O'HARA. A soldier, too.

CAPT. O'HARA. And a gallant one he was.

LADY O'HARA. Why did he leave the army?

CAPT. O'HARA. His father died, leaving an orphan daughter, small means and big debts. There's a campaign at home, said he to me, that I must go back and fight, and so he left the boys who loved him, to enter on the hardest battle he ever faced.

LADY NEVILLE. Ah! How brave! But he will be the success, the triumph of my musicale. I vow,

Sir Geoffrey, you will declare his music ravishing, such *brio*, such *allure*, such *regelmässigkeit*.

SIR GEOFFREY. (*Coming down*) Zounds! Does it take three languages to praise the fellow's semi-quavers?—The plain English of it is, it would give a cat the vapors—

(*Laugh from MAJOR.*)

LADY NEVILLE. Come. Margaret shall put you in a better humor with Mr. Temple's music; she thinks highly of it. We will wait no longer. (*SERVANT enters, D. R. To SERVANT*) I shall order the musicians to begin. (*All rise*)

(*Enter DOXTON, c.*)

DOXTON. Mr. Padbury, a city gent, desires to see Mr. Temple on pressing business.

(*Enter PADBURY c. General titter.*)

LADY NEVILLE. Mr. Temple has not arrived. Kindly await him here! (*LADY NEVILLE exits R. LADY O'HARA and MARGARET cross and exit R. I. SIR GEOFFREY and MAJOR cross up to PADBURY*)

SIR GEOFFREY. Mr. Temple's friends are more original than his music—(*SIR GEOFFREY and MAJOR exit R. I. E.*)

(*Music off R.*)

PADBURY. Ah, Captain O'Hara! (*Coming down c.*)

CAPT. O'HARA. Padbury, what is this pressing business that brings you here?

PADBURY. Well, I might have pressing business, if I pressed my notes.

CAPT. O'HARA. So you come here like a dirty dun.

PADBURY. Why can't he introduce me among his friends? (*PADBURY produces letter*) My dear Padbury: *Though ever mindful of your goodness to me in many ways, I cannot invite you where I am but a guest.* I ain't pressing him for the money, but only to introduce me to his friends. Why don't he ask them to invite me? Ain't I good enough? I may be Lord Mayor of London yet. I have been Alderman twice. I am rich. I want to be among fashionable folks, so that when the King comes to knighting of me I shan't be afraid to say "How do you do" to dukes. (*Sits in chair R.*)

(CAPT. O'HARA is behind him, drawing his sword.)

CAPT. O'HARA. By my soul, I shall be after knighting you myself! (*Clapping him on the shoulder with sword*) Rise, Sir Peter Padbury, and depart.

PADBURY. Ain't I to stay, after all the trouble I took to get in?

CAPT. O'HARA. Faith, you will find it much easier to get out. (*Drawing PADBURY over to the left*)

(LADY NEVILLE enters R., unobserved.)

PADBURY. Ain't he beholden to me for his father's debts? And he won't even introduce me to his friends!

LADY NEVILLE. (*Aside*) In debt to him! (*Aloud*) Captain O'Hara, what does this man desire?

CAPT. O'HARA. I know what he deserves, my lady.

LADY NEVILLE. (*Laughs*) Will you excuse me, Captain, I wish a few words with Mr. Padbury.

CAPT. O'HARA. (*Crossing R. around table*) Be-

lieve me, my lady, my friend is not to blame for this intrusion.

LADY NEVILLE. Go! Go! (*Exit CAPTAIN O'HARA R. I E.—Aloud*) Ah, Mr. Padbury, sit down. (*PADBURY sits*) If you have missed Mr. Temple, you can at least hear his music as it drifts this way.

PADBURY. Yes, my lady.

LADY NEVILLE. I have heard Mr. Temple say you have some interest in him aside from friendly relations?

PADBURY. (*L. sitting, rejoiced*) Oh, he 'as mentioned me! Yes, my lady, I'm his patron. I'm his creditor.

LADY NEVILLE. How very interesting! Then Mr. Temple is somewhat—in your debt?

PADBURY. Somewhat? I hold that thick of his father's notes with his endorsement. He ain't got a penny but it's mine; not a penny.

LADY NEVILLE. Ah, then you are his Maecenas? (*Rising*)

PADBURY. His what? (*Rises, comes c.*) More like his Moses, my lady. It all began with me lending money to his father for his horse-racing. Then when the father died, young Temple comes and says he'll pay his father's debts some day, and so he endorses his father's notes. Oh, he's got pluck and spirit, he has, even if he does play the fiddle! (*Seeing that LADY NEVILLE does not listen, he stops*)

(*Stop music.*)

LADY NEVILLE. (*Rises, seeming to forget PADBURY*) Struggling and involved—! If this weight were lifted from his shoulders, surely he might feel more than this—gratitude—(*R. of table*)

PADBURY. (*c. coughing twice and fidgeting*) Your ladyship doesn't 'ear what I'm saying.

LADY NEVILLE. (*Standing back of table*) On

the contrary, I was thinking how fortunate Mr. Temple is in having such a friend! (*Coming c.*)

PADBURY. That's what I tell him. But he says to me, my Lady, sometimes he wishes I was in my strong-box along with his father's notes. (*Goes L. C.*)

LADY NEVILLE. (*Suddenly—aside*) Indeed! Mr. Padbury, will you call on me to-morrow?

PADBURY. (*Surprised*) Will I call? Your ladyship, I will call in a chariot!

LADY NEVILLE. (*Mysteriously and hurriedly*) You need not wait to see Mr. Temple now. Come early to-morrow, and don't mention it to anyone.

PADBURY. No, my lady—

LADY NEVILLE. Not even to Mr. Temple—and, Mr. Padbury—

PADBURY. Yes, my lady—

LADY NEVILLE. Bring Mr. Temple's notes with you.

(*Enter POMFRET and TWOMBLY.*)

PADBURY. Does your ladyship mean—?

LADY NEVILLE. Hush!

PADBURY. (*Aside*) Your ladyship seems very fond of music?

LADY NEVILLE. Gentlemen, this is Mr. Padbury; Sir Geoffrey Pomfret, Major Twombly—(*Going R. E.*)

PADBURY. How do you do, Sir Geoffrey? How do you do, Major? Nobody never takes no notice of me. (*Goes up c.*)

LADY NEVILLE. (*At entrance r. bowing. Exits r.*) Gentlemen!

MAJOR. (*Both l. of table*) Lady Neville seems interested in Mr. Temple's friends as well as Mr. Temple.

SIR GEOFFREY. (*Front of table r.*) It's monstrous. Lord Neville shall be informed, but how?

MAJOR. Why not a squib in the Chronicle?

SIR GEOFFREY. One that would make him squirm.

MAJOR. Have it placed under the Court News.

SIR GEOFFREY. Good. His Lordship always reads that. I'll write it now. Major, take him aside, pump him, and learn how he stands with Temple. (*Goes to desk R.*)

MAJOR. Mr. Padbury. (*Offering hand*)

PADBURY. (*Coming c. from L.*) Major—(*Delighted. Shakes hands with MAJOR*)

MAJOR. So you are a friend of Mr. Temple?

PADBURY. A friend! A friend indeed! (*Significantly*) I was a friend in need.

MAJOR. So he is in your debt?

PADBURY. He is up to that in debt with me—
promissory notes of every kind. Why, I could clap
him in jail, but I have a good heart. (*Turns away*)

SIR GEOFFREY. (*Coming L. of table*) Major,
read that.

(PADBURY goes L.)

MAJOR. (*Reading*) How long will it be before
the old Lord, her husband, will rhyme with his own
name and send the young composer to the devil—
devil—Neville. (*Laughs*) A fellow in the City?

SIR GEOFFREY. By the way, what did you learn
from that city brute? (*Indicating PADBURY*)

MAJOR. He owns Temple, spurs and feathers—
Deep in Padbury's debt!

SIR GEOFFREY. Good, Padbury must be got to
squeeze him for the money. Twenty guineas if you
land Temple in the sponging-house.

MAJOR. Done! (*Claps hands. Turning to PADBURY—going to him*) Mr. Padbury, when shall we
see you again? I know a gentleman who might take
up one or two of Mr. Temple's notes.

PADBURY. (*Slighted, now swelling with pride, as
he advances*) Sir, I have the honor to wait upon

Lady Neville to-morrow. Perhaps we shall meet here at Burton House.

SIR GEOFFREY. What, here at Burton House?

PADBURY. By her ladyship's special invitation.

SIR GEOFFREY. (*R., half-aside*) Incredible!

PADBURY. (*L. c.*) Oh, it's true. My lady told me to be sure and come—and—between gentlemen, I don't mind telling you that I've found a purchaser for Mr. Temple's notes.

(*Look between SIR GEOFFREY and MAJOR.*)

MAJOR. Indeed, sir, and may I ask the gentleman's name?

PADBURY. (*As if remembering his promise to LADY NEVILLE*) It ain't no gentleman. Ha! Ha!

MAJOR. A fellow in the city?

PADBURY. I don't mention no names—(*Goes up*)

MAJOR. (*To SIR GEOFFREY*) Could it be Lady Neville?

SIR GEOFFREY. No, no, pay a man's debts? (*SIR GEOFFREY looks R.*) Take him away.

MAJOR. Come, Mr. Padbury. I will return with you to the city.

(*Music.*)

PADBURY. With pleasure, Major. I hope her ladyship won't feel hurt at my not saying good-bye?

MAJOR. Oh, no—and then, to the Chronicle. (*Exit L. c. with PADBURY*)

SIR GEOFFREY. (*R. above table*) Paying Temple's debts! No, even she would not be so rash—paying his debts. At any rate I don't think the fellow will call so frequently at Burton House. (*Exits R. I. E. Enter DOXTON*)

DOXTON. This way, Mr. Temple. (*ERIC and ALICE enter. ERIC hands note to DOXTON. He then exits.*)

ALICE. Eric, the music has begun—we are late; and, brother, how can we explain?

ERIC. Explain? The truth will do that, dear. The way was long. I came on foot.

ALICE. Oh, Eric!

ERIC. Courage, dear, only courage. See, my opera here in Burton House! Almost in Darville's hands. Do you not know what that may mean to us?

ALICE. (*Shakes her head*) No!

ERIC. Debts, difficulties, troubles, all at an end. We two free, out of the shadow into God's glad, laughing world, and through you, my work, into which I have poured all the fancies, longings, passions, that were born with me, that have grown with my growth and have strengthened with my strength, until they have burst into one triumphant song of love.

ALICE. Love?

ERIC. Yes, that which I shall sing to-night shall tell her of my hopes, my fears, will lay here my soul, which with this poor song I dedicate. (*Reads*) "*Heartsease, to Margaret. Eric Temple.*"

ALICE. Lord Neville's daughter—a beauty of rank and pride, brother dearest. (*Clings to him*) We two have been all the world to each other, have we not? We have suffered, hungered, hoped together, we are together still. Eric, dear, come away from this new world. Come while there is time, come back into obscurity, into the shadow if it need be, only come. Come away from Miss Neville; forget your love for her.

ERIC. (r. c.) Forget my love for her? Ask me to forsake my music, to put away ambition, to forget my hopes, deny my dreams!—Don't bid me despair. She shall reach down from her high firmament to me as I strive on, until some day I shall scale the heights to happiness.

(*Music stops. Enter CAPTAIN O'HARA.*)

O'HARA. Oh, Eric, my dear boy, I'm just longing to see you. (*Goes to ALICE, L., and takes her hands*)

ERIC. Oh, I know, Jack; you're always longing to see me, and then you might be blind for all you look at me.

O'HARA. (*Looking in ALICE's face*) Sure, I'm gazing at you in the prettiest looking-glass in the kingdom. (*Going up c.*)

ALICE. Captain O'Hara, I protest. You never said such a thing before!

O'HARA. I'm mostly dumb in your presence, but Eric's flint struck my steel, and then the sparks flew; if they only fell on the tinder of your little heart!

ALICE. (L.) It is not tinder, or tender, either, Captain O'Hara. (*Goes up L.*)

(*Enter LADY NEVILLE and DARVILLE, followed by SIR GEOFFREY.*)

JACK. Eric, I'd like to discuss that subject with her. (*Crosses up L.*)

ERIC. Will your ladyship pardon my tardiness?

LADY NEVILLE. You have brought the opera with you? (*Pause.*) Will you not intrust it to me until to-morrow?

ERIC. Lady Neville, I commend it to your care. I cannot thank you, but if you ever hear it, it will tell you at least I know the duty I owe to you.

LADY NEVILLE. Surely it will give you back some part of all the thought you have spent upon it. It shall rest safely here, Mr. Temple. (*Places it in cabinet L.*)

ERIC. I thank your ladyship.

LADY NEVILLE. With what do you intend to delight us?

ERIC. A simple ballad which I hope will please

your ladyship, and which I have called "Heartsease"—

(*Exeunt, O'HARA and LADY NEVILLE. Song off
R. SIR GEOFFREY gets Ms. from Cabinet L.,
looks over its pages.*)

SIR GEOFFREY. That opera will make him famous. (*Puts Ms. back. At end of song, applause*) Margaret is the first to congratulate him. That opera shall never reach Covent Garden. (*Goes up*)

MARGARET. (*Enters R. looking at song*) "*Heartsease, to Margaret. Eric Temple.*" (*Sees SIR GEOFFREY*) Ah, Cousin Geoffrey, why were you not listening to the music?

SIR GEOFFREY. Is it so very wonderful?

MARGARET. Wonderful—to me it seemed like no other music I ever heard; both words and music.

SIR GEOFFREY. (*L. c.*) If I could only touch your heart with words, with music, or with my love!

MARGARET. (*R. c.*) Geoffrey, not again! (*Goes L.*)

SIR GEOFFREY. Ah, I have loved you since you were a child; then I could wait, but now you are a woman, I must have my answer, Margaret. I speak with your father's sanction, Margaret; tell me my love is returned.

MARGARET. Hush, cousin, here come Mr. Temple.

SIR GEOFFREY. S' death! Is there nothing but this Temple in the air—his genius, his opera? (*Crossing L.*)

MARGARET. Yes, more, more, see this song he has dedicated to me.

SIR GEOFFREY. "*Heartsease, to Margaret. Eric Temple.*" Odd! So poetic, and to some purpose, Mr. Temple!

HEARTSEASE.

MARGARET. Write one like it if you can, Cousin Geoffrey. (*Crosses L. C.*)

ERIC. (*Enters R. Comes c.*) Ah, Sir Geoffrey! (*Crosses to c.*) I had hoped to have your opinion of my song. Yours is a judgment I should have valued.

SIR GEOFFREY. To me it has a striking fault. (*Crosses to c.*)

ERIC. (R. C.) Indeed, and that?

SIR GEOFFREY. The dedication.

MARGARET. (L. C.) Since Miss Neville is pleased to allow the dedication, I cannot see how it concerns Sir Geoffrey Pomfret?

ERIC. Miss Neville, I thank you.

SIR GEOFFREY. (*To ERIC*) We will discuss this at another time.

(*'CELLO SOLO off R.'*)

ERIC. At any time you choose. (*Exit SIR GEOFFREY up c.*) Ah, Sir Geoffrey and I were never friends, Miss Neville. Even in the old days at Rugby we were rivals.

MARGARET. Never fear, Mr. Temple, he could never rival this, your song.

ERIC. If it pleases you, Miss Neville.

MARGARET. It seems to fill the air, the room, with witchery. You are a conjurer, sir. What is the secret of your power?

ERIC. It is only in the inspiration, in the sentiment that fills my heart as I write.

MARGARET. (*Seated at harpsichord*) It almost seems to speak.

ERIC. I wish it could, that it might speak for me.

MARGARET. I wonder what, then, it would say?

ERIC. Cannot you guess the words?

MARGARET. No, I only know it is very sweet.

ERIC. And yet the sweetest song that time has

ever sung to life is singing in my heart as I stand thus with you. It is the song of love.

MARGARET. (*Rises*) Mr. Temple!

ERIC. Ah, let me speak.

MARGARET. No, no.

ERIC. (c.) Have I offended you? But what could I do? Love has so filled, so overflowed my heart that I cannot hold the words in check, or if I did, my love for you must find an echo in my voice, if I should say the day is beautiful. I did dare hope you had seen it written in my song. Have I looked too far above me? Must I turn my eyes to earth again? Have I dreamed too fair a dream?

MARGARET. Ah, it is too sweet! It will be too bitter when the dream is past.

ERIC. Can my devotion count for me, cover my poverty and my faults and lift me nearer to you?

MARGARET. Ah, no, it is not that, but pride, the father's dream of an almost royal wedding for the child he loves. (*Goes up*) Ah, Eric, for your own sake I would have you win the success you are striving for. Reach for fame and honors, but should the struggle be too long, come to me, and I will join you at my father's feet.

ERIC. Margaret! You mean—

MARGARET. Eric! I love you.

ALICE. (*Off l. c.*) Eric!

MARGARET. (*Releases herself and rushes to door r. Taking flowers from waistband, she throws them to ERIC*) Heartsease for heartsease. There's a flower for your song. (*Exits*)

(*Enter ALICE r. u. e.*)

ALICE. Eric, what pretty flowers.

ERIC. Heartsease, Alice—Heartsease, and I bought them for a song!

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE:—*Same as Act I.*

DISCOVERED:—LORD NEVILLE seated in arm-chair near table R. C., reading paper.)

LORD NEVILLE. (*Dashing down paper*) This fellow Pitt will never do. We want Lord North again. He'd put the Tories on their feet. (*Rising—with sudden pain*) Ah! The party has the gout, as well as—(*Enter DOXTON, with several folded newspapers on a salver*) Well, what is it?

DOXTON. Papers, my lud?

LORD. I've read the papers. (*Taking the papers*) What's this scrawl? (*Reads with glass*) "Read under the heading of Court News—?" (*Turning over paper hastily*) Another good friend, I suppose, turned out by Pitt to make room for a Whig. Ha. "Court News." (*Reads*) "At all the fashionable clubs, they are watching the intrigue of a young genius who comes of a profligate family." (*Laughing*) Ha! Ha! Gad! The town's full of 'em. (*Reads*) "He has dedicated a song to the Honorable Miss—blank." (*Alert*) A musical genius! (*Reads*) "In order to cover his devotion to—(*With growing anger*) the virgin's young step-mother." Eh! Zounds! (*Reads*) "Bets are offered as to how long it will be before the old lord, her husband"—Damme! is that for me?—"before the old lord, her husband will"—(*Enter POMFRET. Mystified*)—"rhyme with his own name and send the young composer to the devil!" (*Enraged*) Neville! Devil! (*Tearing up paper, stamping on it, then he feels gout twinges, and sits down*)

SIR GEOFFREY. (c.) Why, what's amiss, my lord? (*Seeing papers*) H'm!

LORD NEVILLE. (*Choking with rage*) What's amiss? (*Pointing at papers*) The wasps, the scribblers—the assassins with blanks and dashes—and—and—rhymes—

SIR GEOFFREY. (*Sympathetically*) Is it possible? Rhyming on your lordship? (*Stooping to pick up pieces*)

LORD NEVILLE. Don't stoop to the damned thing! Read that! (*Taking up paper in each hand from salver*) Here! My friends want me to enjoy it. (*Gives one to SIR GEOFFREY and tears the other*)

SIR GEOFFREY. (*Looking slowly over paper*) I can see no rhymes.

(LORD NEVILLE throws it down and is about to stamp on it, but does not, dreading a repetition of gout twinge.)

LORD NEVILLE. No, no rhymes! I make the rhymes!

SIR GEOFFREY. You write poetry, my lord?

LORD NEVILLE. No, damn it! Look there! Read that! (*Takes snuff angrily*)

SIR GEOFFREY. (*Reads paragraph with feigned astonishment*)—Young genius—young stepmother—

LORD NEVILLE. Ah!

SIR GEOFFREY. (*Reading*)—Sending the composer to the devil! Devil!!

LORD NEVILLE. (*Rising*) You see, devil—Neville.

SIR GEOFFREY. (c.) Why not Greville?

LORD NEVILLE. (*Grasping at idea gladly*) Ah! (*Rejecting*) No, Greville's a widower; not such an old fool as to marry again.

SIR GEOFFREY. I feared it. (*Crosses to L.*)

LORD NEVILLE. Feared what?

SIR GEOFFREY. (L. c.) A scandal. I hoped her ladyship would detect it, but this fellow Temple has presumed so adroitly, and it has gone so far.

LORD NEVILLE. (r. c.) So far? How far?
Has—has he dedicated a song to Margaret?

SIR GEOFFREY. (l. c.) Margaret innocently
showed it to me yesterday—she suspects nothing.

LORD NEVILLE. (*Rising*) And Lady Neville?

SIR GEOFFREY. (*Hesitating. Crosses c.*) Lady
Neville. (*Pause*) No doubt—

LORD NEVILLE. (*Rising, coming c.*) Come,
speak like a man, like a friend.

SIR GEOFFREY. (c.) No doubt, Lady Neville is
a trifle dazzled by the fellow's genius—he's queer,
suspicious—engaging after a fashion—and—young.

LORD NEVILLE. (*Angrily*) What the devil has
his age to do with it?

SIR GEOFFREY. (l.) But to suppose that Lady
Neville—oh, absurd, shocking! The fellows who
write these things ought—(*Crosses to l.*) to be
pilloried.

LORD NEVILLE. (c.) You're dodging, Pomfret,
speak out; Lady Neville—

SIR GEOFFREY. (l.) No, on my honor, white as
the driven snow. (*Bows*)

LORD NEVILLE. (r. c. *Recollecting*) Why, the
fellow's coming here to-day. His opera's here. I'm
to speak for it—speak for it—speak for it—and to
him. Zounds! I'll have him forbidden the house—
I'll—(*Going up*)

SIR GEOFFREY. (c.) No, no violence. Your
position's a trifle delicate. Let him come here—
treat him civilly—(*Coolly enjoying* LORD NEVILLE'S
impatience) hear his opera, say it won't do, and—
show him out.

LORD NEVILLE. (*Crossing c. to SIR GEOFFREY*)
Do you take me for a Quaker, or a cringing tailor?

SIR GEOFFREY. (l. of c.) Why wound Lady
Neville?

LORD NEVILLE. Odds life! They—(*Crossing
R. to table. Pointing to paper*) make no face about

wounding me. Where's Margaret? How dares this Temple dedicate—(*Going up-stage c.*)

SIR GEOFFREY. Hush. Temple's sister is with Margaret in the garden. (*Pointing R.*)

LORD NEVILLE. (*Coming down to L. of R. table—sitting*) The whole family? (*Sits R.*)

SIR GEOFFREY. (*Crossing to him c. r.*) My Lord, under your favor, I hope to make Margaret my wife. I trust you will consider me when you think of violence towards Mr. Temple. A little tact, a little patience. (*Enter LADY NEVILLE at back, in street-dress. SIR GEOFFREY bowing, L. U. E.*) Good morrow, Lady Neville.

LADY NEVILLE. (*Going down L. Bowing*) Good-morning, Geoffrey, calling on Margaret already? (*LADY NEVILLE gives staff to page*)

LORD NEVILLE. Your ladyship has been abroad? (*R. c.*)

LADY NEVILLE. (*L. c. A little taken back. Seated on sofa L.*) I was carried through the park in my chair as far as my milliner's in Bond Street—

LORD NEVILLE. Any music at the milliner's?

LADY NEVILLE. (*Laughs. LORD NEVILLE goes up. After a pause*) Music? Oh, lud. Her squeaking English! (*SIR GEOFFREY crosses—and up L.*) Going, Geoffrey?

SIR GEOFFREY. I am waited for at White's, my lady. (*Bows. As he passes up, motions LORD NEVILLE not to show paper to LADY NEVILLE. LORD NEVILLE follows him up, paper in hand. SIR GEOFFREY at back bows again, and smiles maliciously*)

LORD NEVILLE. Come back to dinner.

SIR GEOFFREY. Delighted. (*Business between them. Bows and exits up R. c.*)

LADY NEVILLE. (*Throws herself back languidly*) Are you going out, dear George? You can take my chair.

LORD NEVILLE. (*Drily*) Thank'ee, my lady.
(Looks at papers and then at LADY NEVILLE)

LADY NEVILLE. (*Arranging her toilet and looking at LORD NEVILLE*) You won't forget that Mr. Temple is coming? (*LORD NEVILLE just about to sit, now jumps up*) to play his opera, and that M. Darville—

LORD NEVILLE. (*Suddenly, goes over c.*) My lady! What are you coddling this music scribbler for?

LADY NEVILLE. (*Rising, then with forced laugh, going gaily to him*) You won't laugh?

LORD NEVILLE. Be sure of that—I won't laugh.

LADY NEVILLE. Well, I want to be *à la mode*. I want to be a patroness—a real lady patron of the arts—the discoverer of a genius.

LORD NEVILLE. H'm! (*Crosses R. and sits*)

LADY NEVILLE. (*Going over to LORD NEVILLE, r. c.—over back of his chair*) Just think of it, Lady Montgallop's husband is so much older than you, dear, and yet, because she discovered the poet of Teddington, she's toasted everywhere. (*Crosses down r. back of table*)

LORD NEVILLE. (*Turning to her*) What has my age to do with it?

LADY NEVILLE. Pure coincidence, my lord. (*Sitting r. of table*) Then the young Marchioness of Tenley, who dicovered a Welsh bard at some unpronounceable festival; has been thanked in the name of the Prince of Wales.

LORD NEVILLE. (*Across table*) And is the Marquis as old as Montgallop?

LADY NEVILLE. Older, still older.

LORD NEVILLE. Here's a new industry for young wives of old husbands. (*Rising*) Discovering a genius! (*Goes l. c.*) The genius, of course, must be young. There never was an old genius.

LADY NEVILLE. (*Demurely*) They should, if possible, be discovered young.

LORD NEVILLE. (*Taking out watch*) What time does this young genius of yours come here to-day?

LADY NEVILLE. (*Rises—brightly*) In an hour.

LORD NEVILLE. (c.) Well, I'll be here and Darville won't.

LADY NEVILLE. (*Crosses L.*) He will.

LORD NEVILLE. (*Crosses to R.*) He won't.

(*Rings*)

LADY NEVILLE. He will.

LORD NEVILLE. (*Crosses R.*) He won't.

LADY NEVILLE. (*Crosses L.*) Why not, my lord? Am I to have none of the privileges of a woman of quality? Must I be denied all the distractions proper to my age?

LORD NEVILLE. (c.) This Temple's father was a profligate.

LADY NEVILLE. (l. c.) A pretty reason! (*Goes up L.*)

LORD NEVILLE. (r. c.) He's a Lovelace himself—learned the art in Italy.

LADY NEVILLE. (l. c. *going to him*) Fie, my lord. Who was been abusing this worthy man to you?

LORD NEVILLE. Who? Everybody. Zounds, I don't like him! (*Enter DOXTON. Crosses to R.*) Won't have him. Doxton—

DOXTON. Yes, my lord?

LORD NEVILLE. My compliments to M. Darville at Covent Garden Theater, and he needn't trouble to come.

DOXTON. Yes, my lud!

LADY NEVILLE. (l. c.) My compliments to Darville, and, and—and—(*Confused*) Oh, dear—(*Stops at a look from LORD NEVILLE*)

DOXTON. Yes, my lady.

LORD NEVILLE. (*To Doxton*) Now, go!

DOXTON. Yes, my lady.

LADY NEVILLE. (*To Doxton*) No, wait.

DOXTON. Yes, my lady.

LORD NEVILLE. (*To DOXTON*) Now, what's your message?

DOXTON. You don't like him and you won't have him, and he needn't trouble, my lud!

LORD NEVILLE. (*Down R. c.*) Oh, go to the devil!

DOXTON. Yes, my lud. (*Exits hastily c.*)

LORD NEVILLE. I'll leave the message myself. (*Sits R.*)

LADY NEVILLE. (*Walking up and down stage*) 'Tis fortunate I am no longer a dependent as well as a wife.

(*Enter MARGARET R. I E.*)

LORD NEVILLE. Your old aunt died with her two hundred thousand pounds in the nick of time, eh? To make you independent, and ride hobbies in spite of me, eh? (*MARGARET, seated R. of table, takes LORD NEVILLE's hand*) Margaret, you are a girl of common sense, I appeal to you.

LADY NEVILLE. Very well, my lord. (*Goes c.*) I shall retire. I don't relish an appeal to a daughter who is only four years younger than her mother—(*Up at door R.*) although forty years younger than her father. (*Exits at R. 3 E.*)

MARGARET. What is it, father? (*Crosses back of table*)

LORD NEVILLE. This Temple dedicates a song to you—Insufferable!

MARGARET. Why, father, it is an honor.

LORD NEVILLE. Bah! It is only a cover to—the long and the short of it is, I don't wish Lady Neville's name to be publicly paraded with this fellow. He is—a wholly unworthy person.

MARGARET. (*Rises, goes c. Going c.*) Oh, my lord, you are in error. He is a true, brave man, and in music, a genius.

LORD NEVILLE. Eh! You've caught the cant

word, too ; you also are going about discovering, eh ?

MARGARET. (c.) I don't understand.

LORD NEVILLE. Then you shan't.

MARGARET. (*Crossing to him and kneeling at his knee*) Father, tell me what you have heard ?

LORD NEVILLE. All the clubs are talking about it. This Temple is one of those designing—ah—specious fellows who steal into women's hearts with a trick of a fan or a glove. (*She rises*) Ah ! You've noticed the fellow's arts ?

MARGARET. No, father, it is—incredible.

LORD NEVILLE. (*Rising, goes to her, c.*) Well, keep a sharp lookout—for my sake.

MARGARET. Father, I'll not hear of it—Lady Neville ? (*Going d. e.*)

LORD NEVILLE. Then if you'll not concern yourself about it, leave it to me and your Cousin Sir Geoffrey. He has *some* sense of the family honor, and since you will be Lady Pomfret soon—maybe it's as well. (*Crosses to c.*)

MARGARET. I shall never be Lady Pomfret ; I do not love Sir Geoffrey.

LORD NEVILLE. Pooh ! A man with ten thousand a year. (*Goes up c.*) A musician—since you love music ! You'll change your tune.

MARGARET. (*Aside, goes up*) Eric ! Lady Neville ! Oh, I'll not believe it ! (*Exit r. 2 e.*)

LORD NEVILLE. (*Looking after her*) Could she ? Oh, nonsense ! H'm ! The first thing is to stop Darville. (*Going up c. Enter DOXTON with another hat and cane*) Why couldn't you bring these at first, dolt ? (*Putting on hat*)

DOXTON. (*In door*) Major Twombly, and a City gent.

LORD NEVILLE. (*In anger*) Oh ! Oh ! (*Goes r.*)

(*Enter PADBURY and MAJOR, PADBURY with some*

ribbons on his coat, MAJOR in a new suit. Exit DOXTON.)

MAJOR. (*Coming forward with a swagger down c.*) Our duty, my lordship. (*Bowing*)

LORD NEVILLE. (*R. buttoning coat*) To what do I owe the—honor? (*Looking savagely at PADBURY*)

PADBURY. (*Down L. of c.*) We thought you'd be gone out, my lord.

LORD NEVILLE. (*Going up c.*) Oh, you did? Well, I'm going out. What do you want?

PADBURY. (*Crosses c.*) Go straight out, my lord. It's Lady Neville I'm come to see, and the Major skipped along with me friendly-like.

MAJOR. (*Crosses to PADBURY*) Allow me, Mr. Padbury.

PADBURY. (*Crossing to MAJOR*) Allow me, Major?

LORD NEVILLE. (*L. of c.*) Oh, rot it, I'm in a hurry! What do you want? (*Goes L.*)

PADBURY. (*R. c., coming down to him. Bowing*) Lady Neville invited me to Burton House and here I am, so I said to myself, her Ladyship's bent on helping genius——

LORD NEVILLE. Oh, you, too—ah!

PADBURY. Me, too?

LORD NEVILLE. (*Backing PADBURY to r.*) Has Lady Neville been discovering you? Are you young? Are you a genius?

PADBURY. Don't kick, my lord.

LORD NEVILLE. Kick? Damme, you'd tempt Saint Peter—(*Walking L., then up*)

PADBURY. (*Following him*) If everything goes right with my lady and me, I'll invite you, my lord, to the biggest *feet shampeter*—which means, my lord, a French feed in the open air. (*R. c.*)

LORD NEVILLE. (*Going*) Why don't you invite me to a bed?

PADBURY. (*Up to him*) Heartily welcome.

LORD NEVILLE. Oh, intolerable! (*Going up c.*)
PADBURY. But, my lord—

LORD NEVILLE. Oh, go to the devil! (PADBURY turns) Damme now, I'll settle the genius. (*Exits c.*)

MAJOR. You've put your *feet shampeter* into it, Mr. Padbury.

PADBURY. (L. c.) Why don't you back me up? Ain't I took you to my house? Ain't I filled you with old beeswing port? (*Crosses to c.*)

MAJOR. (R. c.) Pooh! Answer a civil question. Have you clapped Temple into jail?

PADBURY. (Smiling) No, I am merciful. Besides, how can I put him into jail if he pays his debts?

MAJOR. (L. c.) Has he paid them, Padbury?

PADBURY. They're as good as paid! Look here— (*Taking out notes, points over shoulder*) Her Ladyship invited me yesterday, and sent a chairman to-day with a billet doux telling me not to forget to come and bring the notes. Ha, ha, ain't it good?

(Enter DOXTON R. 3 E.)

DOXTON. (L. 2 E.) Her ladyship will receive Mr. Padbury.

PADBURY. (Nudges MAJOR. To DOXTON) Very good, sir. (*Crosses c.*)

MAJOR. H'h! H'm! Fellow! Fellow!

PADBURY. (c. to DOXTON) Very good, fellow. I'll wait upon her ladyship. (*Comic business with DOXTON and PADBURY—Exits R. 2 E.*) Major, you'll wait for me.

MAJOR. (c.) Paying Temple's debts! Here's news for Sir Geoffrey.

(Enter LADY NEVILLE and PADBURY up R.)

LADY NEVILLE. Understand, Mr. Padbury, not a word of this to anyone, not even to—

(Enter DOXTON c.)

DOXTON. Mr. Temple, my lady.

LADY NEVILLE. (*Hesitates—pauses*) Ask the gentleman to await me in the garden.

DOXTON. Yes, my lady. (Exit DOXTON)

LADY NEVILLE. (*Up steps*) Mr. Padbury, kindly remain here for the moment. (Exits r. c.)

PADBURY. Paid at last. (Enter ALICE and MARGARET) Oh, I have a good heart. (Goes l.)

MARGARET. Come, Alice.

ALICE. (c.) There's Eric and Lady Neville in the garden, and Captain O'Hara. Oh, Miss Neville, don't you think that I—that you—that we——?

MARGARET. Yes, dear, go to them if you wish.

ALICE. Oh, I don't wish. I merely thought that perhaps,—I think I'd better go. (Exits c.)

MARGARET. Mr. Padbury——

PADBURY. (*Coming down l. c.*) Welcome, I say, Miss, the noble chance that led to this tooth-some taste of fashionable life.

MARGARET. (*Smiling as if in spite of herself*) You enjoy it, Mr. Padbury?

PADBURY. Enjoy it? Oh, hugely, I assure you, Miss—and I owe it all to my goodness of heart.

MARGARET. Indeed?

PADBURY. Honorable Miss Neville, you wouldn't think I almost owned Mr. Temple up to a quarter of an hour ago?

MARGARET. Indeed!

PADBURY. Why, he was up to that in debt to me—promissory notes of every kind. Oh, I've a good heart——

MARGARET. (*Eagerly*) His debts are paid? (Back of table r.)

PADBURY. Oh, Lord Neville is his warm friend.

MARGARET. (*Surprised—with interest*) My father?

PADBURY. (*Hesitates*) Well—not exactly your father—next door to it—almost the same thing—Lady Neville—

MARGARET. (*Going c. to him*) Lady Neville?

PADBURY. (*L. c.*) Hush, it's a secret. I'll tell you all about it.

MARGARET. (*R.*) Mr. Padbury, I can hear no more. Kindly leave the house.

PADBURY. (*Goes up c.*) Well, the aristocracy is odd! First they order you in, then they order you out! (*Exits up c. L.*)

MARGARET. (*Sinks into chair l. of table r.*) Lady Neville pay his debts!

(Enter O'HARA and ALICE from garden *L. c.*)

CAPT. O'HARA. And what is your hurry, Alice? Sure, the flowers'll stop growing if you leave them so soon.

ALICE. Oh, Captain O'Hara, didn't you see Lady Neville wanted to talk to Eric? (*Rises*) Oh, Miss Neville—(*Crossing to MARGARET*)

(MARGARET still shows signs of irritation.)

CAPT. O'HARA. (*Aside*) I want to talk to Eric myself. (*As if making up his mind*)

ALICE. (*To MARGARET. Coming down*) Miss Neville, you are angry with me for staying so long in the garden with—Eric—

CAPT. O'HARA. (*Coming down c.*) You see, she is very fond of Eric, and Eric is very fond of her.

MARGARET. (*R. Smiling*) Everybody should be fond of Mr. Temple's sister, Captain.

CAPT. O'HARA. (*Coming to c.*) That's what I say: "Love me, love my sister."

ALICE. Oh, Captain! (*Crosses to L.*)

CAPT. O'HARA. (*R. c., aside*) Gad, that's nearer

than I ever came to saying it! (*Enter C. ERIC and LADY NEVILLE*) Here comes Eric. I'll say it to his face: "Eric, I love your sister! I love your sister."

(*LADY NEVILLE goes to cabinet L. and takes out opera score. MARGARET looks at LADY NEVILLE with a pang of jealousy.*)

CAPT. O'HARA. (*To ERIC R. C.*) Eric, I have something to say to you. (*Aside*) "I love your sister", "I love your sister". (*Aloud*) I've—something to say to you, Eric—I—I—

ERIC. Well, what is it, Jack?

CAPT. O'HARA. Well—well, I'll say it some other time. (*Going R.—aside*) I'll never be able to say it. (*Turns up c. to back*)

LADY NEVILLE. (*Advancing from R.—down L.*) Mr. Temple, we should like to hear you play from your opera. Here is the score. (*Handing the Ms. to ERIC*)

ERIC. I know it without this. This—(*Touching score*) is the orchestral score. To-day all the songs of spring are tingling through my spirit.

ALICE. (*Goes to L. of table; to MARGARET who is at R. E.*) Oh, Miss Neville, won't you sing "Heartsease" for us—the song that Eric dedicated to you?

ERIC. Yes, I beg of you.

MARGARET. Yes, I'll sing "Heartsease" for the last time.

(*Exits, followed by CAPT. O'HARA and ALICE. ERIC looks after MARGARET, surprised.*)

ERIC. Lady Neville, won't you join them?

LADY NEVILLE. One moment, Mr. Temple. I want a word with you. Be seated. (*ERIC and LADY NEVILLE sit at table R.*) We must make a little

change in our arrangements. (*Rings bell on table*) M. Darville is not coming. I have written him, see? —(*Showing note*) that the score will be sent to him at once, and your work will be heard, I am sure. (*Enter DOXTON up c. L.*) Where's Green?

DOXTON. Out, my lady.

LADY NEVILLE. Wilkins?

DOXTON. Out, my lady.

LADY NEVILLE. My chairman?

DOXTON. They're carrying my lud, my lady.

LADY NEVILLE. (*Rising*) I want a messenger at once. Call a chairman. A public porter—anyone, but at once.

DOXTON. Yes, my lady. (*Exits L. U. E.*)

LADY NEVILLE. (*Turns to ERIC—tenderly*) Well, am I doing my best for you?

ERIC. (*Rising, crossing c.*) You are over-kind. I—I—don't know what to say. If I gave my feelings play, my words would seem extravagant. (*LADY NEVILLE pleased and almost tremulous, her eyes sparkling*) My heart is full—I would speak, but I cannot—at least, not now.

LADY NEVILLE. (L. C.) Do not be afraid to speak.

ERIC. (c.) Oh, if I dared—Margaret! Shall I tell her of our love? Yes, I will!

LADY NEVILLE. Come nearer, tell me, tell me what is in your heart?

ERIC. (*Joyously*) My heart? (*Looks towards music-room*)

LADY NEVILLE. Yes. (*Pause*) Have you ever loved?

ERIC. Loved? Love is no longer a timid beggar at my door; it is a welcome guest.

LADY NEVILLE. Ah! (*Goes and sits L.*)

ERIC. With your goodness and kindness, Lady Neville, I feel I may confide. It is not alone that I have loved, but that I have loved almost without hope until yesterday, when two angel hands seemed

reaching down to open the gates of my Paradise.
 (LADY NEVILLE gives him her hand, smiling. He takes it respectfully) I have dared—you have guessed it—to love a sweet clear being moving in a world beyond me.

(*Music and song.*)

LADY NEVILLE. Ah! I was right——

(MARGARET'S voice is heard singing "Heartsease.")

ERIC. (l. c.) Listen! (Pause. Listening)

"Their melody divine,
 Is singing to my longing.
 My darling shall be mine."

ERIC. So lips and souls are saying, my darling shall be mine.

LADY NEVILLE. (Seated l.) The words thrill me.

(*The music ceases suddenly off-stage.*)

ERIC. Such is my love.

LADY NEVILLE. Yes! Yes!

(Enter MARGARET; goes up c. Giving ERIC her hand.)

ERIC. Bless your kind heart, Lady Neville, you knew my secret—(Bending over her hand. MARGARET sees ERIC and BARBARA, stands transfixed and shudders) that all my hope in life, all the love of my being is centered—(*In low voice*) In Margaret.

(MARGARET, wide-eyed, speechless, sinks back through curtain. Enter GEOFFREY L. U. E. LADY NEVILLE is vexed and astounded.)

ERIC. (*During above business*) Will you not tell her that you know? (*Long pause—then rises—light laugh*)

LADY NEVILLE. (*In laughing irony—Crossing from L. to c. Seeing POMFRET*) Ah, Geoffrey, you are just in time. Mr. Temple is about to play from his opera. He has it here, you know. (*Indicating book*)

POMFRET. (*Bowing stiffly*) Mr. Temple is unusually gracious. (*Crossing L. to ERIC*) This is the famous work we have heard of?

ERIC. (*Crossing from L. to r. in front*) Lady Neville, I shall be pleased to play some passages from it. (*Exits R. 2 E.*)

POMFRET. (*L. c. up*) H'm! A pretty talent, eh, my lady?

LADY NEVILLE. (*Pause R. c. to POMFRET*) Geoffrey, you should not let the opportunity slip with Margaret. Mr. Temple may prove a dangerous rival in more than music. Be bold! Be bold!

POMFRET. Is that a challenge, or advice? (*LADY NEVILLE laughs tantalizingly and exits R. 2 E. Piano music heard off-stage. POMFRET looking after her*) I can be bold when I see my way, Lady Neville. (*Listens to music*) That's cleverly turned. (*Goes a step R. as if to go in, then halts*) No, why should I applaud the fellow? Prove a dangerous rival? Not so dangerous, my lady. But if Margaret loves him? 'death—I must not let an opportunity slip. (*Sits R. table—picks up letter*) A letter! "M. Darville, Covent Garden Theatre"—Lady Neville's handwriting—H'm. (*Pause*) All his hopes are built on this, with Lady Neville as the first story in his house of cards. (*Rises—turns, goes back to table and faces audience*) If that damned thing were destroyed, it—Dare I? Why not? (*Music swells forte. He starts to hurriedly open the Ms. on table R. Pause, then crossing quickly to table R.*) Lady Neville's letter. (*Sees it*) Ah! To Daryville.

(Laughs) It's a hundred to one hazard. (*Writes on LADY NEVILLE'S letter. Crossing out address*) "Major Twombley, White Horse Cellar, Windsor coach-room." (*Sticking it under tapes of book*) "To be called for." I can send for it there—and see if it is so wonderful. Any rate, he will not have—

DOXTON. (*At sound of Doxton's voice POMFRET recovers himself*) A chairman to take Lady Neville's letter is below, Sir Geoffrey.

(Enter CHAIRMAN l. u. e. Crosses to c. then sees POMFRET.)

POMFRET. Where are you going?

DOXTON. To Lady Neville, for the chairman's fee.

POMFRET. No. Can't trouble Lady Neville. (*Throwing coin*)

DOXTON. Thank ye, sur. (*Exits with book and letter up c. followed by chairman*)

POMFRET. (*Rising*) Now we may hear his music. (*Laughing—stop music*) And praise it, (*Going r. Crossing over to r. arch*) and then for the White Horse cellar!

(Enter MARGARET r. c. down c.)

POMFRET. (r. 2 e.) Mr. Temple is playing from his opera.

MARGARET. (r. at table) It does not interest me as you seem to imagine.

POMFRET. Will you not join us?

MARGARET. Thank you, no. (*Sits l. of table. POMFRET looks surprised and exits r. In subdued tone l. of table r.*) Father was right—unworthy—base.

(Enter ERIC, radiant, r. 2 e.)

ERIC. (*Takes her hand across r. of table r.*) You should have been there, Margaret. It was the first time in years I played a note of the opera. And it sounded sweet, as though your soul was playing through my fingers. Margaret! Margaret!

MARGARET. (*Rising, withdrawing hand*) Stop!

ERIC. (r. c.) Margaret!

MARGARET. Do not dare to call me Margaret.
(Crosses c. up)

ERIC. (r.) Why? In the name of our love?

MARGARET. (c.) Love? You profane it!

ERIC. Margaret, what does this mean? (r.)

MARGARET. I will tell you—once for all.

ERIC. For pity's sake!

MARGARET. (c.) I cannot. It is horrible. You are false, false not only to me, but to those—(*Bitterly*) who would help you with their patronage.

ERIC. (r. c. *stupefied*) Patronage!

MARGARET. (c.) Aye, patronage. You are false to everything.

ERIC. Margaret, you must tell me.

MARGARET. (*Going L.*) I will tell you nothing.

ERIC. God knows why you have done this. I have lived only to worship you—but, Margaret, dear, my love will clear all in the end.

MARGARET. It is the end—

(Enter LORD NEVILLE.)

ERIC. Not that, Margaret.

LORD NEVILLE. (*Advancing c. paper in hand—sternly*) Mr. Temple!

ERIC. (r. c.) Lord Neville.

LORD NEVILLE. Read that, sir.

(ERIC looks at paper.)

ERIC. (r. c.) A vile slander.

LORD NEVILLE. (c.) Ha! We'll see! You did

dedicate a song to my daughter—without my permission.

ERIC. (R. C.) Your permission? I should have perhaps asked you, but—

LORD NEVILLE. It was a gross impertinence.

ERIC. (*Angrily*) My lord!

LORD NEVILLE. Now, as to the rest—

ERIC. (R.) The rest is infamous.

LORD NEVILLE. Infamous. That is the word—you intrigue with Lady Neville, play upon her vanity, to have me back up some stuff you call an opera, and then, by gad, I was fool enough to do it.

ERIC. Stop!

LORD NEVILLE. (C.) Stop?

ERIC. Yes! Viscount or varlet, I'll hear no more. No man could.

LORD NEVILLE. Does a man play and fawn upon a woman's vanity till she pays his debts?

(Enter ALICE, O'HARA, and LADY NEVILLE, R. I. E. PADBURY and MAJOR C.)

ERIC. (*Goes R.*) It's a lie! Like the rest—a lie!

ALICE. (R. *Going to ERIC*) What is it, dear?

ERIC. (R. C.) Insult, nothing but insult.

LORD. NEVILLE. (L. C.) Here is the man—(*Pointing to MAJOR*) who told me of it. Speak, sir.

MAJOR. (*Coming down with PADBURY L.*) Well, here it is. Mr. Padbury told me that Lady Neville was paying Mr. Temple's debts.

ERIC. (R. C. *stupefied*) Padbury, speak, for God's sake! You can refute it.

PADBURY. (C.) What's the use of it all, Mr. Temple? There are the notes. They are paid.

ERIC. Is that story true? Who paid them? (*PADBURY hesitates*) Who paid them?

PADBURY. Lady Neville.

ERIC. Lady Neville? (*Looks at her as if understanding.* LADY NEVILLE looks imploringly at

him. ERIC speaks aside to PADBURY as if saying
"Go! Go!!")

(PADBURY exits followed quickly by O'HARA and
the MAJOR.)

LORD NEVILLE. (Goes r. Crossing to LADY NEVILLE. MARGARET sinks on sofa L.) Lady Neville, am I—disgraced?

LADY NEVILLE. (r. of r. table) My lord! My lord!

ERIC. (c.) One moment, Lord Neville. I admit this assistance from Lady Barbara. I was hard pressed. I plead with her, begged her, and she at last consented, on condition that I should inform you and repay the debt as best I could through you. I needed the money, my lord. (Goes L.)

(LADY NEVILLE draws a long breath of relief.)

LORD NEVILLE. (l. c.) But you denied it a moment ago? (Suppressed anger)

ERIC. Yes.

LORD NEVILLE. Then you lied? (Violently)

ERIC. Yes, my lord. Give me my opera and let me go.

LORD NEVILLE. (Rings bell) Doxton! Jenkins! (l. u. e.) Give that man his opera and let him go.

POMFRET. (r.) My lord, what is the meaning of this?

LADY NEVILLE. Where is it?—'twas here—quarter of an hour ago. (Business—looking at table. Goes to cabinet) It must be in the music room. (Exits r. 2 e.)

LORD NEVILLE. Doxton! Jenkins! Get him his opera and show him to the door.

POMFRET. (Soothingly) My lord, my lord!

LADY NEVILLE. (Entering in doorway) I cannot find it anywhere.

ALICE. (*Crossing to ERIC*) Eric! Eric!

LORD NEVILLE. (*To POMFRET*) Ah! Perhaps he has taken it himself to get money out of me. That trick won't do.

ERIC. (c.) Thank you for that insult, Lord Neville. I want no quibbling, no evasion now.

ALICE. (r. of c.) It was there awhile ago. I saw it.

LORD NEVILLE, (*Crossing down L.*) Am I to understand it is lost, stolen, here among you all?

ERIC. Lost? Stolen? My God, the only copy!

LORD NEVILLE. (l. u.) Well, if it has been lost here, I can pay you for it.

ERIC. (c.) Pay me? Pay me for it! Can you pay me for my hopes, for my years of toil and struggle? Can you pay me for these? No, it shall be found! It shall be found!

LORD NEVILLE. (*Scornfully—seated L.*) Come, sir, how much?

ERIC. I tell you there is not enough blood in your bitter, bitter heart to pay me for it, and—(*Looking agonizingly at MARGARET, whose eyes meet his for a moment*) all that its loss means to me.

LORD NEVILLE. How much, sir?

MARGARET. (*Crossing between LORD NEVILLE and ERIC, and laying her hand on LORD NEVILLE'S Father!*) Not that!—not now.

ERIC. (c.) I thank you, Miss Neville.

MARGARET. Not for your sake, sir, but for my father's dignity. You have been false—false to trust—false to everything that man should hold in honor.

(LADY NEVILLE and POMFRET *exeunt R. 2 E.*)

LORD NEVILLE. (*Rising and crossing R.*) You're right, Margaret. (*To ERIC*) My lawyer shall see you to-morrow. Come, Margaret.

(MARGARET crosses to LORD NEVILLE and takes his hand, draws herself proudly up, then passes R. with LORD NEVILLE but does not halt, and passes off R. 2 E. ERIC stands amazed, utterly overcome, looks wistfully after her, his hand wanders over the back of the chair R. Tears start to his eyes as he bows his head. ALICE comes tenderly to him, her hand steals into his; he grasps it spasmodically, turns quickly towards the door, his arm about his sister, bows his head, broken utterly and in tears, and goes slowly as curtain falls.)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE:—*The box-tier at Covent Garden. A staircase on L. side. The back of the boxes seen L. Three of the box-doors practical. A tremendous and prolonged burst of applause off-stage follows the end of the music as the curtain rises.*

DISCOVERED:—PADBURY and MAJOR coming down-stairs.

PADBURY. (*At foot of stairs*) Steady, Major, steady! The King's in the house.

MAJOR. (*Drunk*) Long live the King! Long live Sir Geoffrey Pomfret! Long live "Hildebrand." (*Crossing to c.*)

PADBURY. Sir Geoffrey won't like you in this state.

MAJOR. (L.) Won't like me? He's got to like me. He's got to stand by me—wait and see. (*Exeunt L. 3 E. with PADBURY*)

(Enter ALICE, O'HARA and LADY O'HARA l. i. e.)

CAPT. O'HARA. Aunt, I didn't know it was Pomfret's opera, or by the powers, we wouldn't be here.

(ALICE up stage. Group 2 passes up-stairs—one remaining on balcony.)

LADY O'HARA. (l. c.) I thought it didn't matter where you were, so long as Alice was with you.

(Enter QUIGG at back l. u. e. He comes down to O'HARA, touching his hat. LADY O'HARA joins ALICE up c.)

CAPT. O'HARA. To be sure, but—what is it, Quigg?

QUIGG. If you please, Captain, Mr. Eric Temple is arrived from Paris at your lodgings, sir.

CAPT. O'HARA. At my lodgings?

QUIGG. (l. c.) He said his letter explained all.

CAPT. O'HARA. (r. c.) Dear, dear, now, I got no letter. (Aside) And he's there, and Alice is here, and I'm here, too. (Aloud—sympathetically) And how does she look, Quigg?

QUIGG. Poorly, sir—disappointed-like.

CAPT. O'HARA. Of course, not finding his sister.

QUIGG. Captain, shall I tell Mr. Temple to come?

CAPT. O'HARA. (l. c.) No—yes. (To QUIGG) Yes, tell him to come—to Lady O'Hara's box. (Crosses to r.)

QUIGG. (c. Saluting, turning away and then turning) Beg pardon, sir, a little supper, Captain, after the opera?

CAPT. O'HARA. Yes, yes, Quigg, for two, and the best to be had.

QUIGG. Very good, Captain. (Exits l. u. e.)

CAPT. O'HARA. Aunt—(LADY O'HARA goes to

him) did you hear that? Eric Temple's in town, and coming here? Don't tell Alice.

LADY O'HARA. And why not?

CAPT. O'HARA. You know, Aunt, you'd give her a shock. Leave it to me. I'll break it gently to her.

LADY O'HARA. I'd like to see you break anything gently, Jack, but come. (CAPTAIN and LADY O'HARA go up-stage)

(Enter PADBURY and MAJOR L. U. E., crossing to r.)

PADBURY. Steady Major! Here come the nobs.

(Slight applause. Door of box No. 2 opens, and enter LORD NEVILLE, followed by POMFRET who is uneasy, and DARVILLE, who is enthusiastic. Movement of interest among the ladies and gentlemen as LORD NEVILLE comes forward. O'HARA halts an instant as POMFRET enters, then bows to couples and exits l. u. e. with ALICE and LADY O'HARA.)

LORD NEVILLE. (Turning to POMFRET) By Gad, you've hit 'em, Geoffrey! Didn't you hear 'em? Don't be nervous now, man. How Barbara clapped! Split her gloves, I do believe.

POMFRET. (r. c. uneasily—trying to smile) I thank you, I thank you, my lord. (LORD NEVILLE and DARVILLE go up, attracted by a lady and gentleman whose bow he returns. LORD NEVILLE and DARVILLE chat, down r.) Margaret did not congratulate me, she never moved. (Goes l.)

MAJOR. (Seeing POMFRET) Hi, Paddlebury, there's Sir Geoffrey! Damme, I'll congratulate him. (l. c.—crosses to POMFRET, and slapping him on the back) Pomfret forever! (POMFRET turns and scowls) What did I tell you, Sir Geoffrey! We know where this opera of "Hildebrand" came from! Don't we? Ha! Ha!

POMFRET. (*Crossing to L.*) How dare you!
You drunken beast!

(LORD NEVILLE and DARVILLE cross to R. *chatting.*)

MAJOR. (c.) Drunk? I wasn't always drunk,
was I? You're a pretty fellow to call me a beast.

POMFRET. Leave me, or I'll run you through.

(*Group 2 comes down stairs laughing and chatting.*

*Group 1 moves towards stairs meeting group 2
—chat.*)

MAJOR. Try your famous *coup de jarnac* on me?
No more use for me, eh? (*Goes R. in front*) Come,
Padbury!

(LORD NEVILLE *goes down.*)

PADBURY. Ah, my lord!

LORD NEVILLE. (c.) The linen-draper!

PADBURY. (r. c.) You're enjoyin' it, my lord,
just as if it was a saddle of south-down mutton with
turnip trimmin's.

LORD NEVILLE. (L.—angrily) Ah!—City
gourmandizer!

PADBURY. (c.) We ain't met, my lord, since
that little trouble about a year ago about Mr.
Temple's debts, but I say shake hands. (*Offering
his hand*)

(*Group pass up-stage gradually. Group 1 exit
L. I. E.*)

LORD NEVILLE. (*Looking at PADBURY'S hand
through glass*) Go to the devil! (*Turns up-stage—
indignant*)

MAJOR. (*Crosses R. to stairway*) Come, Pad-
bury, we're not wanted here. (*Halting at stairway*)

PADBURY. (c. l. *waving deprecatingly to MAJOR, crosses l. meeting POMFRET*) Sir Geoffrey to show you I've no hard feelings on account of his lordship's eyeglass, I'll take three pit tickets for your Third Night benefit and send my clerks to clap.

POMFRET. (c.) Sir!

PADBURY. (c. r. *ingratiatingly*) Oh, you won't have to send no begging letters to me, like most authors. (*Taking out purse*) I'll pay you for 'em, ready money. (*POMFRET dashes purse out of PADBURY's hand and turns haughtily away*) Cash down!

MAJOR. (*At stairs*) Now are you coming, Padbury? (*Goes up stairway*)

PADBURY. (*Picking up purse*) I'm coming, Major. (*Joins MAJOR—both turn and shake their fists at POMFRET, whose back is turned and go out upstairs. Enter LADY NEVILLE in gay mood, followed by MARGARET, sad and pensive*)

(*Group I enters l. u. e. and dress stage at back, talking.*)

LADY NEVILLE. (l. c.) I vow, Geoffrey, I envy Lord Neville.

(*DARVILLE and LORD NEVILLE coming down r.*)

POMFRET. (c.) Why, Lady Neville?

LADY NEVILLE. (l. c.) Because he is the foster-father of "Hildebrand."

POMFRET. (c.) I am much indebted to his lordship's urging.

LORD NEVILLE. (r. c.) Why, six months ago, Geoffrey said he thought he would try his opera with Darville, and I said, Try it.

LADY NEVILLE. (*Crosses r. to LORD NEVILLE*) You're modest, my lord.

LORD NEVILLE. (r. c.) 'Gad, you made such a

failure as a patroness of young genius, I thought I'd discover a genius for myself.

(LADY NEVILLE turns pointedly away and back to R.—*A couple, lady and gentleman, bow to her, —they gossip.*)

POMFRET. (L. c. going to MARGARET) Margaret, the verdict that I wait upon is yours.

MARGARET. (L.) Mine is of little value, Geoffrey.

(*Music stops.*)

POMFRET. (L. c.) But it is to win your warm esteem, to bring honor to you, that I have done all this. I would have the whole world at the feet of the lady who will be my wife.

MARGARET. (*Wincing a little*) The opera is most favorably received. I am glad, of course. (*Sits L. up-stage. Gives him her hand, which he kisses. Talks to her*)

LORD NEVILLE. You're coming, Geoffrey? (Up L. c.)

POMFRET. Yes! (*Halting*) No, I have something in the house to look to. I shall join you on the stage.

LORD NEVILLE. Don't fail. I must be returned safely to her ladyship. (*Exeunt R. I E. with DARVILLE*)

LADY NEVILLE. You will come back safe, dearie.

SIR GEOFFREY. I must see Major Twombly at once. I cannot afford to quarrel with him.

LADY NEVILLE. (*Crossing to c.*) Geoffrey, be patient with her. Your triumph to-night will work wonders.

SIR GEOFFREY. A little warmth now would not be out of place. (*Exits upstairs. Exit ALICE and CAPTAIN O'HARA L.*)

LADY NEVILLE. (c.) Margaret, you are behaving shamefully to Geoffrey. He complains of it.

MARGARET. (*Standing at door. Exit 2 supers and LADY O'HARA, R. U. E.*) He has nothing to complain of.

LADY NEVILLE. A little warmth, he said just now, would not be out of place, and when a young woman of fashion is pledged to a dashing young gentleman, she might well—

MARGARET. (l.) Have I promised warmth, enthusiasm? Urged, coerced by everybody, I consented to marry him—I told Sir Geoffrey I did not love him. I let my father pledge me, because—

LADY NEVILLE. (*Lightly*) Because Sir Geoffrey is a man any woman might admire. (*Stopping c.*)

MARGARET. (*Significantly*) Because there was so much baseness in the world.

LADY NEVILLE. (c.) My love, the world won't ask your excuses for marrying a rich young baronet—at least, you need not give them. (*Facing MARGARET*)

MARGARET. (*Sternly—with growing warmth, rising and going c. Facing LADY NEVILLE*) Lady Neville, it is time you knew that there are things you should not meddle with.

LADY NEVILLE. (c. r.) And what, pray?

MARGARET. A woman's love.

LADY NEVILLE. (r. c.) Hoity-toity, Miss Neville, why—? (*A little taken aback*)

MARGARET. (c.) You know, I see it in your face. I have been silent. I suffered all, lost all, because the past was irrevocable, because to punish you would be perhaps to shame my father.

LADY NEVILLE. (c. r.) Lost all? You mean—

MARGARET. (l. c. *faces audience*) I loved Eric Temple!

LADY NEVILLE. (c. r.) You loved him? I did not know that.

MARGARET. Oh! (*Incredulously*).

LADY NEVILLE. (*Going to her*) I swear I did not.

MARGARET. No, your simpering vanity lured him to your feet; made him base enough to beg, if he was not already base enough. You gave him money—and then you saw him crushed, spurned, taking his shame upon him without one word of pity.

LADY NEVILLE. You did not pity him yourself—I did not dare.

MARGARET. If you loved him! No, no, you could not—have loved him, but I had seen him at your feet, had heard him. Oh, it was fresh from the sight of that, that I had no pity for him—it was that filled me with hate and contempt for you. (*Turning away*)

LADY NEVILLE. (*Turning and, in intense suppressed tone, goes R. Comes back to R. C. then speaks*) The words of love you heard him speak were all for you.

MARGARET. For me? (*Bitterly*) Ah, while begging you to pay his debts.

(*Two steps up L. then turning slowly as LADY NEVILLE speaks.*)

LADY NEVILLE. (*L. C.*) He never begged! He never knew. I did it unasked. It was my own impulse—weak perhaps, vanity perhaps—to have him owe much to me. Once known, I could not face it to your father.

MARGARET. (*Confronting BARBARA*) You let Eric Temple ruin his life to save your name?

LADY NEVILLE. (*Hanging head*) Wounded pride, anger, fear held me, and he was the stronger; he was a man.

MARGARET. It shall not be, it must be undone, you must undo it.

LADY NEVILLE. What must I do?

MARGARET. Tell my father—(*LADY NEVILLE R.*)

what fable you like, but it must clear Eric Temple's name.

LADY NEVILLE. (R. coming c.) Is there no other way?

MARGARET. (L. c.) Yes, I can tell him. (*Movement to L.*)

LADY NEVILLE. (c.) No, no. If you love him still, help me.

MARGARET. Love him still? Love him still? All night the memory of his love for me, my love for him, has been near me. The house, the applause, the music, bring it back and keep it by me. (*Goes L.*) Its memory is mine forever now. (*Sinks into chair L.*)

LADY NEVILLE. I'll do it—I'll tell your father the truth. (*LADY NEVILLE crosses to MARGARET, strokes her hair, then passes back of her and speaks line. Exits into box*)

MARGARET. My love! My love! To be near you, to comfort you—Oh, heaven! (*Rises*) I have not the right. I am *pledged to his enemy!* (*Music. Exits L. 3 E.*)

(Enter CAPTAIN O'HARA by stairs. He goes down ruminating. ALICE and LADY O'HARA follow him, but remain on balcony. CAPTAIN O'HARA signals to LADY O'HARA to send ALICE down. LADY O'HARA does so. ALICE descends. LADY O'HARA laughs, shakes her finger at CAPTAIN O'HARA and exits above.)

ALICE. Now, what do you want to say, Captain?
CAPT. O'HARA. I have something to say to you, Miss Temple. (*Aside*) Eric not here yet, how can I tell her! (*Aloud*) Don't leave me.

ALICE. I'm not going to leave you, Captain.

CAPT. O'HARA. (c.) That's right. You'd have my death at your door if you did.

ALICE. (L.) Don't talk of dying, Jack.

CAPT. O'HARA. (r. c.) Well, I may, for it has come at last. (*Laying his hand on his heart and hanging his head*)

ALICE. (l. c.) What has come? Don't terrify me. Have you an affection of the heart?

CAPT. O'HARA. I have, this long time, but that's nothing. I'm used to that.

ALICE. (l. c.) Oh, dear, what can it be?

CAPT. O'HARA. (c.) I'll have twelve duels to-morrow if things go on as they are.

ALICE. What has happened?

CAPT. O'HARA. I'm told the King has spoken about it to the Prince of Wales. I'll be cashiered from the army.

ALICE. What is it? Oh, dear!

CAPT. O'HARA. (c.) It will be in all the papers to-morrow. You, and only you can save me.

ALICE. I?

CAPT. O'HARA. Sure, that's why I mention the trifle to you, Alice darling.

ALICE. I'll do it, Jack, and I'll save you at any cost.

CAPT. O'HARA. (c.) Then you'll have to marry me.

ALICE. (l. c.) Jack! (*Turning shyly away*) How will that save you?

CAPT. O'HARA. Sure we've been seen together, my jewel. They're all talking about it. Oh, save my good name, save my good name! (*Kneeling to ALICE*)

ALICE. I'll do it—even that—to save your good name.

CAPT. O'HARA. Oh—(*Kisses her*) I'm saved! I'm saved! (*Kisses her*) I'm saved again! And now, Alice, you'll tell Eric. (*Go to l.*)

ALICE. Yes, gladly. (*Crosses up l. two steps*)

CAPT. O'HARA. Bedad, I haven't told her about Eric myself. (*Goes r.*)

(Enter MARGARET L. U. E.)

ALICE. Jack, Miss Neville. Shall I speak to her?

CAPT. O'HARA. (r.) Whatever the softest, dearest little heart in the world tells you to do.

ALICE. Miss Neville.

MARGARET. (*At door turning quickly*) Alice! Alice! You speak to me! (*Embracing her*) Alice! Your brother, Eric—has he found any trace of the opera that was lost?

ALICE. (c.) No, no trace. After his long sickness, he went abroad.

MARGARET. (l. c.—*pause*) And you, dear?

ALICE. Lady O'Hara was good to me and has cared for me, and Captain O'Hara was a brother to Eric, and prevailed on him to go to the Continent.

MARGARET. (l. c.) Captain O'Hara—(*Giving him her hand*) You were good to Mr. Temple.

CAPT. O'HARA. (c.) Miss Neville! My friend is my friend while there's one drop of blood in my heart.

ALICE. (*As if about to embrace him—l. c.*) Oh, Jack! (*Goes up r.*)

CAPT. O'HARA. (*He goes to MARGARET and, taking her aside*) Miss Neville! You can do me a mighty big service.

MARGARET. Gladly.

CAPT. O'HARA. I've something that I want to break gently to Alice, and I'm that heavy-handed, I break an egg as if it were a skull. I want you to tell her that her brother is no longer abroad, and that he is coming here to-night.

MARGARET. (*Clutching at him, and staring at him wide-eyed and tremulous*) Eric Temple coming here to-night? Alice!

ALICE. Miss Neville, what is it?

MARGARET. Your brother! He is coming here to-night.

ALICE. Eric! Eric! To-night!

MARGARET. Yes, yes.

ALICE. Captain, is this true?

CAPT. O'HARA. (*Stammering*) Yes, it's true.

ALICE. Oh, why did you not tell me before! I'll never speak to you again. But come, Miss Neville, I must inform Lady O'Hara at once.

MARGARET. Alice! (*Exeunt L. I E.*)

CAPT. O'HARA. (*Looking after them*) I could have broken it as gently myself. (*Exits L. I E.*)

(MAJOR and PADBURY come down the stairs.)

PADBURY. (c. on stairs, near bottom) You said he sent a package to the White Horse cellar.

MAJOR. (r. c. just behind him) Never you mind what I said. Sir Geoffrey had to apologize; he had to. (*Comes down on stage and going L. of PADBURY*) And now, hark you, Paddlbury—not a word of what I told ye a moment ago, not a word of what I've ever told you. Understand! Don't permit yourself to remember that you ever heard a word about anything. In fact you never did hear anything about—

PADBURY. (l. c.) But I did.

MAJOR. Then I accuse you of a falsehood, sir.

PADBURY. You do, and I ain't told no lie.

MAJOR. Then I've insulted you, and I expect a challenge.

PADBURY. There can be no offense between gentlemen friends.

MAJOR. You're bound to call me out.

PADBURY. No, sir, you are my guest. I cannot challenge you.

MAJOR. You are my guest, I asked you to my friend's opera.

PADBURY. I paid for the seats.

MAJOR. (r. c.) That is a trifle no gentlemen should mention. (*Both move up-stage*)

PADBURY. Then I'll not mention it. A pinch of snuff? (*Back to audience—offers box*)

MAJOR. Bah! (*Tips snuff box and it spills over PADBURY's face and ruffled shirt. PADBURY rubs it—MAJOR exits L. U. E.*)

PADBURY. Oh, lord! here's a mess—right in the opera too—and the King in the house.

(Enter LORD NEVILLE L. U. E. PADBURY collides with him as he enters.)

LORD NEVILLE. Deuce take the man! What ails him?

PADBURY. I beg your pardon, my lord, but I'll be revenged, I will. When I've washed my face, I'll have a White Horse cellar to tell you of. Oh! Oh! (*Exits L. I. E.*)

(*Soprano solo heard.*)

LORD NEVILLE. (*Going to box*) Margaret not here! (*Turning. Enter MARGARET L. I. E.*) Ah, Margaret, I was looking for you.

MARGARET. I have just left Miss Temple, father.

LORD NEVILLE. Temple, Margaret! You should not notice these people.

MARGARET. Father, we have wronged these people.

LORD NEVILLE. A disgraced, discredited man—a vile intriguer, his sister!

MARGARET. (c.) Disgraced because he was brave, discredited because of another's cowardice.

LORD NEVILLE. (l. c.) You are raving, Margaret. The fellow's out of our world. We've done for him for good and all.

MARGARET. (l.) No, he was never in our world as he is to-night.

LORD NEVILLE. (*c. to her*) This sister has been telling some pitiable tale.

MARGARET. (*Turning slowly to him*) It is a pitiable tale. It doesn't come from Eric Temple's sister, but from your lordship's wife.

LORD NEVILLE. Lady Neville? (*Points to box 2*)

MARGARET. She will tell you. I—I cannot. (*Crosses to r.*)

LORD NEVILLE. Riddles, Margaret. I want no riddles. What have the fellow's rights or wrongs to do with you?

MARGARET. (*Turns to him*) Father, I love Eric Temple.

LORD NEVILLE. (*L. over to her*) You dare to say that to me?

MARGARET. (*r.*) He was a man of honor.

LORD NEVILLE. (*Goes to box*) You are promised to Sir Geoffrey. Silence, I will not hear another word. (*Aside c.*) Lady Neville will tell me—hum —what? I wonder? Come, Margaret. (*Exit L.* MARGARET sinks into chair L. Bows her head and weeps. LORD NEVILLE contemplates her for a moment)

(MARGARET going L. is still pensive. Her despair has numbed her. Music changed to ERIC motif. MARGARET seems to listen to it—passes wide-eyed, trance-like, toward the box and is about to enter.)

ERIC. (*Off-stage L. u. e.*) Lady O'Hara's box, I believe?

(MARGARET starts and turns. ERIC entering. Crossing to foot of stairs L.)

MARGARET. (*r.*) Mr. Temple!

ERIC. (*c. halting*) Miss Neville.

MARGARET. (L.) I knew your voice. I was expecting you.

ERIC. Expecting me?

MARGARET. (L.) I heard you might be here. Your sister Alice told me.

ERIC. They sent word to me.

MARGARET. (L. c.) One moment. I would ask, have you trace or tidings of your work?

ERIC. (At r. c.) Ah! (*His head drops as he crosses c.*) No! It is gone—gone forever.

MARGARET. (L. c.) We tried hard, indeed we did, to recover it, but—

ERIC. Miss Neville, do not wring my heart speaking of it. Loss? It went, and left me among the shattered wrecks of life, drifting—(*Lowering his voice*) on a sea of chaos. I talk in foolish rhapsody, but—

MARGARET. (c. l.) If I could help you—

(*Music.*)

ERIC. (*Reproachfully*) Why did you not help me? As long as I lay ill, it was not my lost opera I raved about. With the first consciousness it was your face hovering about my pillow—your eyes still loving—your lips still kissing—ah—

MARGARET. (*Going up back c.*) Oh, do not recall that.

ERIC. (*Laughing bitterly*) No, no! It was a false face, a mask. I laughed at the reality that was showing in your face, day after day, night after night, cut in hard cold marble.

MARGARET. (*Down r.*) You will recall it. (*Weeps*)

ERIC. And as it hardened and hardened, I saw it mocking me.

MARGARET. Mocking?

ERIC. (*Pause*) Now look, it is wet with tears.

MARGARET. (*Up to him*) But I did not know—

ERIC. (c.) Why were my letters sent back unopened? I could not dog your steps, I would not do that.

MARGARET. (r.) But Lady Neville has told me.

ERIC. Ah, no one could rescue me from myself but you. It was the loss of you that brought despair. I have sat and sat, my mind grasping after my melodies as if I would drag them from oblivion and win you in spite of all. I have heard them sobbing or sighing far off, as—(*Looking about him c.*) I seem to hear them now—(*Turns away*)

MARGARET. I want to tell you. You must hear it. I have told Alice. (*He turns at her wide-eyed as if listening*) It was because I thought you were more to Lady Neville than to me—that I—turned from you! (*ERIC gasps as he understands*) I saw you—close to her—her hand in yours—her eyes burning into your eyes—

ERIC. (*Advancing c. to her. L. bursting into a hysterical laugh*) Really! Good God! Was it that?—that moment in which the first confession of my love was breathed to any mortal but *yourself* and *Alice!* (*Looks wildly at her—turning*) My poor music is sobbing in my ears—for the pity of it—the cruel pity of it. (*Suddenly*) And it all came from that?

MARGARET. (*Bowing her head*) Yes.

ERIC. Then as that was an hallucination—a fantasy—(*Stops suddenly c.*) Tell me, what opera is this?

MARGARET. (*Receding L.*) “Hildebrand.”

ERIC. (c.) “Hildebrand?” Its story?

MARGARET. An old Norseman—a Viking—his daughter, Fredegonde—

ERIC. Ah! (*Pause. Sigh. As if trying to recall the conversation*) Yes! Hallucination—ghosts of words and ghosts of melodies. My God! I cannot think. Whose opera is this?

MARGARET. (L. H.) Sir Geoffrey Pomfret's.

ERIC. (R. H.) Ah! Pomfret! Then I can laugh at it.

MARGARET. (*Frightened—going L.*) I must leave you.

ERIC. (*Advancing c., catching her hand*) No, no, don't go. I know what I am saying. No, no. It shall not break the current of my thoughts again. I was saying, was saying—that—that—(*Decisively*) since it was a hallucination—your thought, your fancy, that I loved any woman in the world but you—we may again—

MARGARET. (*Beside ERIC c. L. Staring at him*) It is too late, I am pledged to another—

ERIC. (C. R.) To—to whom?

MARGARET. (*In low tones*) I am plighted to Sir Geoffrey Pomfret—

ERIC. (*Lets her hand fall*) I knew I hated him—deep, deep in my heart, I hate him! I hate him—hate him!

MARGARET. (*Turning and appealing*) But you will not hate me?

ERIC. (*Clasping her in his arms*) You love me! The ring of despair in your voice tells me that you love me—(*Grasping her in his arms*)

MARGARET. (*Struggling*) Eric—(*Trying to release herself*) Oh, this is madness.

ERIC. Call it what you will. It's a glimpse of Heaven. Margaret, Margaret, have pity on me.

MARGARET. Mr.—Eric! Eric! Eric! Mr. Temple. (*Releases herself by a sudden effort—indignant—drops a red rose in the struggle*) How could you forget yourself? (ERIC extends his hands to her. Falls on his knees. MARGARET sadly) We must never meet again, never, never, never. (*Exit into box 2*)

ERIC. (*Stands petrified. Kneels towards the box and extends his arms imploringly, despairingly; sees red rose, stoops slowly, picks it up, kisses it, raises it as if in adoration of her it typified, bends over it*

and kisses it, raises it and bends over it kissing it for the third time, then the music steals into his consciousness again. He listens intently, half frightened, raises his hand as if to mark time to it—pauses and says whisperingly) The ghosts, the ghosts are singing my melodies, my harmonies in my ears again. (*Stares again*)

(Enter ALICE L. I E.)

ALICE. Eric! (*Takes ALICE in his arms, then listens to music*) Sing on, sing on, my songs. Listen, Alice, my music, listen: mine—mine. (*ALICE shakes her head*) Not mine? Then I'm mad. Alice, I'm going home. My music—haunts me. I'm tired, beaten, I want rest. Come home. (*Goes R.*)

ALICE. Eric!

(*Music swells louder.*)

ERIC. (*Starts, almost shouting*) Alice, do you hear that?

ALICE. (L. C.) Not so loud, dear.

ERIC. (C.) Am I going mad? (*Enter O'HARA L.*) Do you hear? Listen, Alice—Jack!

ALICE and JACK. (R. of ERIC—JACK L.) What?

ERIC. Listen! (*Pause—listens intently*) Note for note—note for note—either that, or I am a hopeless lunatic. (*Taking ALICE's hand on the one side and CAPT. O'HARA's on the other*)

ALICE. Yes, yes.

ERIC. Ever since I entered this place; through all my wild, whirling, torturing talk with her, my music—the music of my lost work has been ringing in my ears. Tell me, Alice, I know what I am talking about, don't I?

ALICE. Yes, dear—of course you do. (*He releases their hands*)

ERIC. Then that—(*Meaning the music which is playing*) is mine.

CAPT. O'HARA. No, Eric, that's Pomfret's opera.

ERIC. Pomfret! Again Pomfret! Listen!
(Beats time for a few bars) There! I anticipated that.

CAPT. O'HARA. No, no, that's "Hildebrand."

ERIC. (*Loudly*) "Hildebrand?" No, no! I tell you it's mine. In the face of a thousand Pomfrets, I'll swear it's mine. A mother knows her child—I know the children of my brain! It's not "Hildebrand," it's "King Lear!" (Enter POMFRET by r. staircase, tripping and looking triumphant, he reaches stage at end of ERIC's speech, recognizes ERIC and stops. ERIC recognizes POMFRET and advances on him. Picture. ERIC l. c. points up-stage towards music and both men look at each other—one pale with fright—the other trembling with rage. Pause) Thief!

POMFRET. How dare you? (Coming forward a step or two)

ALICE. Eric! Eric! (Calling to him—he puts her away)

ERIC. Not content with taking from me the woman I love, you have stolen what would have given her to me. (Seizes POMFRET by the throat and shakes him) Confess—confess! (Loud applause off-stage. MARGARET enters from box).

MARGARET. Eric! Eric!

ALICE. (Screams) Eric!

(ERIC has struggle with POMFRET, at length throwing him forcibly to the ground, then stands above him in a rage of triumphant passion, shouting incoherently. His voice heard above the din.)

ERIC. Reptile! Detested dog! Treacherous hound! Sneaking thief!—Your life! Your miserable life!

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE:—CAPTAIN O'HARA's lodgings—a room comfortably furnished and hung with weapons, antlers, etc., c. At back, a wide door draped with a curtain; R. a fireplace—fire lighted—red glow. Two branch candlesticks on mantel-piece, L. a window in recess, window seat and flower pots on sill—moonlight streaming in. Main entrance at back on L. of flat (corner) by practical flight of three steps, with balustrade curving slightly to R. The steps rise to a hall which is seen to run off at back to the L. A candle lighted on table in hall, but moonlight streaming in on it. Entrance also by small door R. above fireplace from high hall windows. Large high-backed armchair near fire. R. C. a table with flap to let down. It is laid with a white cloth and covers for two, wine glasses, etc. A three-branch candlestick (lighted) on table, two chairs near it. Sideboard R. of curtained door against flat. Iron knocker on hanging board off L. of hall; large lock whose bolt can be shot audibly on board below knocker.

MUSIC:—“Heartsease” for curtain.

DISCOVERED:—QUIGG arranging table; wine glasses, etc.

QUIGG. It's well I had that pheasant roasted. She's a ring-necked beauty! (*Chime strikes eleven off-stage as in distance*) Eleven o'clock! They'll be here soon, now! Well, I'm ready for them. (*Stands off surveying the table. Loud double knock heard off L. U. E.*) There they are! (*Goes upstairs and off L. taking candle from hall with him, and unlocks door audibly. Pause*),

(Music of "Heartsease" heard off—very piano.
Enter CAPTAIN O'HARA, quickly and cheerily.
He trips down the steps, goes to C. and turns
towards steps.)

CAPT. O'HARA. Come, Eric. (Going to table)
Supper is waiting for us. (Enter ERIC from hall.
He is wrapped in his cloak—sad and dejected.
Comes down steps, throwing off cloak. Enter QUIGG
replacing candle on hall table and coming to ERIC.
Aloud) Take Mr. Temple's cloak and hat, Quigg.

ERIC. (To QUIGG—as he takes cloak and hat)
Leave them here, Quigg. (Puts them on chair up-
stage. Going to CAPTAIN O'HARA) No, Jack, no.
I've no heart for feasting. (To QUIGG) Bring my
portmanteau; you have only to close it.

QUIGG. (A little in wonder) Very good, sir.
(Exits R. U. E.)

CAPT. O'HARA. What d'ye want with the
portmanteau? Are you going to sit on it end up, at
supper—as we used to in the fighting days at
Tanjore?

ERIC. No, Jack. I have had my fight—I have
lost. It is hopeless—I should be gone. Jack, I am
going away.

CAPT. O'HARA. Ha! Ha! Ha! Eric, we'll
talk about that after supper.

ERIC. Jack, I can't eat, and I must go now.
The beaten soldier must retreat—you know that.
There's nothing else to do.

CAPT. O'HARA. Nothing else to do?

ERIC. I can't stay where I have lost so much.
Why, then, split hairs on whether it is to-day or to-
morrow?

CAPT. O'HARA. (Decisively) Well, you're not
going away now.

ERIC. (A little nettled) Jack!

CAPT. O'HARA. (Sharply) Well, you're not, by
my soul, you're not.

ERIC. (Angrily), Jack!

CAPT. O'HARA. (L. C.) Now, Eric, the last thing I saw at Covent Garden as I buffeted our way to the street was a haughty baronet with his hands on his throat wondering whether the life was choked out of him.

ERIC. (R. C.) Ah, I could not control myself.

CAPT. O'HARA. Well, it was against the code duello, but Eric, it was mighty well done.

ERIC. (*Thinking of it with aversion*) Ah, it was unworthy.

CAPT. O'HARA. (*Gleefully*) Well, you struck him, and if Pomfret would ever hold up his head again he must challenge at once.

ERIC. Jack, I did not think of that, ah, Jack—

JACK. I went over it in my mind all the way here and I can see no way out of a challenge for Pomfret.

ERIC. Good, Jack, good!

CAPT. O'HARA. We may look for it at any moment—

ERIC. Splendid, Jack, splendid!

CAPT. O'HARA. I thought I'd only have to mention it, so you see you must wait here to fight him.

ERIC. Till doomsday, if he'll fight.

CAPT. O'HARA. (*crosses to L.*) Well, meanwhile we turn our thoughts to supper.

ERIC. I felt my blood stir in my veins again, yes, yes. Despair so numbs the soul that the eyes forget to see, the mind to reason.

(*A double knock heard at door off L. U. E.*)

CAPT. O'HARA. (*Off-stage*) Major Twombly! This way, Major.

(*Enter MAJOR by the steps, severe, important.*

CAPTAIN O'HARA replaces candle and trips down after MAJOR.)

MAJOR. (L. C. *bowing stiffly*) Mr. Temple.

ERIC. (*c. bowing*) Major Twombley!

MAJOR. (*Stands L. H.*) I may infer, gentlemen, that this unseasonable visit is not unexpected.

ERIC. (*r. seated*) You can best explain, sir.

MAJOR. (*L.*) I am Sir Geoffrey's Pomfret's friend. As the lamentable occurrence is fresh in our memories—

ERIC. Pass the preliminaries, I pray, Major.

MAJOR. (*Half reclining*) I have the honor to demand on my principal's behalf the satisfaction due a gentleman, and to demand it instantly.

ERIC. Yes, he shall have it.

MAJOR. You will name a friend with whom the details can be arranged?

CAPT. O'HARA. (*c.*) There's no necessity to name him—his name is Jack O'Hara.

MAJOR. As the challenged party—

CAPT. O'HARA. We choose swords; six in the morning, in Hyde Park, principals, seconds; and I'll bring a surgeon. (*As he names each condition he turns to ERIC, who nods assent to each*)

MAJOR. (*Rising*) Very good, Captain. We hoped for a quicker meeting.

ERIC. (*Rising*) Stay! Name *your* conditions.

CAPT. O'HARA. By my soul, no. We've settled them. It's our right.

MAJOR. My principal presses for an instant meeting.

ERIC. (*To JACK*) Why not?

CAPT. O'HARA. (*To ERIC*) Leave it to me. (*To MAJOR*) Under the Clonmel code—the code for gentlemen anywhere—we have already conceded a point. We have received and honored a night challenge, which is ordinarily inadmissible. (*MAJOR bows and goes towards stair. QUIGG enters R. U. E. with portmanteau and portfolio*) Very well, at six o'clock in the morning at Hyde Park.

QUIGG. Your portmanteau, Mr. Temple. (*Exit QUIGG*)

MAJOR. (*Laughs, returning L. c.*) It appears, gentlemen, I was barely in time. I would remind you, Captain, the night challenge is admissible "Where the party to be challenged intends leaving the place before morning." Is the point well taken?

ERIC. Sir?

CAPT. O'HARA. (*Crosses to MAJOR*) Major, you're going too far; you'll have something to say to me about this.

ERIC. (c.) No, no, Jack, he's right. We cannot fight too soon. The chance of finding Pomfret eager will not find me unready. We'll fight *here*, now, in the light or in the dark.

MAJOR. (*To CAPTAIN O'HARA*) Would you permit a fight here?

CAPT. O'HARA. Devil take it, why not? You make a man's blood boil, and ask him if he's hot. Ay, here. I'll take care of that.

MAJOR. Here, in an hour.

ERIC. At twelve o'clock.

MAJOR. At twelve o'clock, gentlemen. (*Goes up, conducted by CAPTAIN O'HARA, who bows him out. Door shuts*)

ERIC. (*Sits a moment gazing before him as the MAJOR goes out, then suddenly springs to his feet*) An hour! Now I have new life, new passions, something to live ~~an~~ hour for. Pomfret's sword may add my life to what he has taken, but he shall not take it easily. (*CAPTAIN O'HARA comes sympathetically to ERIC*) Not as he stole my work. Not as he stole my love.

(*Enter QUIGG R.*)

CAPT. O'HARA. (*Putting ERIC in seat at table, facing audience*) And now for a bit of this pheasant—(*Going to R. side of table and carving*) and a glass of good Burgundy alongside of it. (*Passing plate. To QUIGG*) And now your lordship can leave us. (*Sitting L. of table*)

(*Exit QUIGG R. U. E.*)

ERIC. (*Raising glass*) Jack! (*Drinks*) Ah, that's the real fluid of life itself.

CAPT. O'HARA. Ah, Eric, you need that. (*Eating*) Oh, her ladyship's tender. (*ERIC looks up*) I shot her myself in Lord Oxford's preserves. (*ERIC laughs, clinks glass with JACK and empties it; refills*) It reminds me of the days we went pheasant-shooting in Tanjore.

ERIC. (*Sits back of table*) Ah! Glorious days! (*Drinks and begins eating*)

CAPT. O'HARA. Why, when I tell them over at Lady O'Hara's how you brought that bird down, Alice laughs till—

(*ERIC drops fork and knife.*)

ERIC. (*With sudden gravity of manner*) Alice?

CAPT. O'HARA. Never fear for Alice, Eric; husband or brother, she'll have someone to look after her.

ERIC. Jack—(*Drinks*)

CAPT. O'HARA. Eric, I've got a secret to tell you.

ERIC. Yes?

CAPT. O'HARA. I've been wanting to tell you this long time.

ERIC. What is it, Jack? (*Reaching for decanter*)

CAPT. O'HARA. I'm determined at last to tell it.

ERIC. (*Pouring wine*) Well, out with it, Jack.

(*Holds up glass*)

CAPT. O'HARA. (*Hesitating*) Well, you know— (*With sudden desperation*) I love your sister.

ERIC. (*Drinking*) Yes, Jack. Go on.

CAPT. O'HARA. I love your sister.

ERIC. But your secret?

CAPT. O'HARA. Why, that's it, I love your sister.

ERIC. Why, that's no secret.

CAPT. O'HARA. You know it?

ERIC. (*Reaching his hand*) Everybody knows it. Jack! God bless you! God bless you both. We'll drink to her health.

CAPT. O'HARA. With all my heart, but steady, Eric. Eating is better for you than drinking now. (ERIC eats) Why, I was afraid to tell Alice you were coming to the opera to-night, and if it wasn't for Miss Neville who, barring your sister, is the most charming girl I ever saw—(ERIC drops knife and fork) A little too old, perhaps. (*Business*) I mean the bird.

ERIC. (*Dreamily*) Oh!

CAPT. O'HARA. Why did you stop eating?

ERIC. Eh! Oh! I stopped to drink. (*Drinks*)

CAPT. O'HARA. Then we'll drink her health, too. Miss Neville. (*Raising glass. Rising*)

ERIC. (*Rising*) God bless her!

CAPT. O'HARA. (*Starts—looks at ERIC*) Why, Eric, you said that as if you loved her.

ERIC. With all my soul.

(CAPTAIN O'HARA and ERIC touch glasses silently, drink, and sit quietly.)

CAPT. O'HARA. I see, it was not the loss of your opera that broke your heart.

ERIC. (*Slightly inebriated*) Jack, there are steps and grades in loss on loss, before heart-break comes. (*Looks towards candlestick and draws it towards him, looking at it*) Jack, when my father died the golden sands ran out of life's hour glass for me. Fortune went. (*Extinguishes a candle*) But the star of music, mystic, luminous, fascinating, rose and drew me after it—as the star drew the shepherds' Kings. Jack, then music died away. (*Puts out the second candle*) Still one light burned—the lamp of love. It shone out clear and mellow, and still I lived, Jack, still I lived; but, oh, Jack, since that pure flame is quenched and dead, and

shines for me no more, it is utter darkness—as it is here now. (*Extinguishes third candle. Pause*)

CAPT. O'HARA. Bedad, you've made it dark for both of us.

ERIC. (*Grasping decanter*) Yes, black and blank, but—(*Pausing*) still there's something to do. (*Drinks*)

CAPT. O'HARA. Eric, your hand will never be steady, and it has need to be.

ERIC. (*Rising*) Why, I haven't a nerve. I feel like a man freezing to death. (*Goes to mantelpiece at R. H.*) A man should be warm till he dies. I'll drink your health, Jack; I feel as if I could sleep.

CAPT. O'HARA. Faith, that's an idea, somebody says that sleep knits up the ravelled socks of care.

(ERIC sits in large armchair near fire, back to audience.)

ERIC. (CAPTAIN O'HARA brings cloak and puts it about ERIC) Is this rest at last? Bless you, Jack, bless you! (*Falls asleep*)

CAPT. O'HARA. Poor fellow! A little sleep will do him good. Half an hour yet. (*Going to R. U. E. calling off in low tone*) Quigg! Quigg! (Enter QUIGG) Clear away, Quigg. (*Knock at outer door L. H.* QUIGG moves table to back as told) I'll go myself. It can't be they already. (*Exits L. 3 E. Pause. Door closes. Voice of PADBURY, off-stage*)

PADBURY. Captain! Captain!

CAPT. O'HARA. Whist!

(Enter PADBURY, followed by CAPTAIN O'HARA L. 3 E.)

PADBURY. (L. C.) Where's Mr. Temple?

CAPT. O'HARA. (C.) He's asleep; you'll wake him—there he is.

PADBURY. (*Crossing to R. C. Looking at ERIC*)

Don't he look pale? Poor chap, he looks as if he had his share of trouble.

CAPT. O'HARA. Trouble, is it? Enough to make him what he was to-night, a madman.

PADBURY. What for?

CAPT. O'HARA. For accusing Sir Geoffrey Pomfret of having stolen "Hildebrand" from him.

PADBURY. Did he do that?

CAPT. O'HARA. Yes.

PADBURY. Then I can prove he wasn't mad, and that is why I came to you to go with me to Burton House, and Lord Neville would listen to the facts from you.

CAPT. O'HARA. Go on man, what is it?

PADBURY. You know Sir Geoffrey's friend the Major? He was in his cups to-night, and had some words with Pomfret. In his drunken indignation he confessed to me he had assisted Sir Geoffrey to steal Mr. Temple's opera. It was given to the chairman who was called to Lady Neville's, directed to the White Horse cellar to be called for, and the Major called.

CAPT. O'HARA. Oh, by the powers!

PADBURY. Shortly after hearing this, I had reason to leave the opera house and I found the very chairman that took the package; he is waiting for me outside.

CAPT. O'HARA. I'll wake Eric and tell him! No, I'll let him sleep, poor fellow.

PADBURY. (*Louder*) Lord Neville ought to know it. I'd tell him myself if I didn't think he'd kick me for talking to him. Oh, I've had enough of nobs. (*Crosses to CAPTAIN O'HARA, going to door, L. U. E.*)

CAPT. O'HARA. Sh! You'll—you'll waken him. (*PADBURY goes up steps. L. C.*) Now you can go to bed, Quigg. You're not wanted to-night, no matter what you hear, understand?

QUIGG, (*R. C., at sideboard*) Yes, sir.

CAPT. O'HARA. Good-night.

QUIGG. Good-night, Captain. (*Exits R. 3 E.*)

CAPT. O'HARA. (*Aside*) I can be back before they come. Who'll let me in? I'll leave the door ajar. (*Takes hat and goes L. up steps*) Padbury, if you're an old grocer, you've a good heart.

PADBURY. I always said so, Captain.

(CAPTAIN O'HARA stops his mouth.)

CAPT. O'HARA. Whisht, and come on!

PADBURY. I'm a comin'—I've a good heart.
(R. *Exits L. U. E. following CAPTAIN O'HARA*)

(*Long pause: thirty seconds. Heartease played on cello, off—a light tap heard as on wainscot outside, and after an instant it is repeated. MARGARET appears in hall, comes cautiously forward and down one step, looking around.*)

MARGARET. (*Low tone*) Captain O'Hara!
(*Descends another step*) Mr. Temple!—Mr. Temple! (*Reaches floor*) Am I too late? I heard—I know Geoffrey will force him to fight, I cannot bear it. (*Crosses R. up-stage*) Mr. Temple. Mr. Temple! (*Sees ERIC asleep*) Ah, safe!—asleep! (*Approaching ERIC and three-quarters facing audience. Kneels R. C. near chair*) My love! My love! You cannot hear me, but I have come, dear, to lift the shadow from your soul. You told me of your love for me through shame and suffering. They said you were mad, but when your song, my song, "Heartease," came to my ears in the opera to-night, I knew then you had but reclaimed your own—and here upon my knees I ask you to forgive me, to forgive me!

(ERIC's hand moves. He is seen to turn his head slowly towards MARGARET and to lean towards

her as if she were a vision. She extends her hands towards him. He leans forward, touches her, starts back, rises.)

MARGARET. Mr. Temple!

ERIC. In Heaven's name, what brings you here?

MARGARET. Justice! I am here to right the wrong I helped to fasten on your life.

ERIC. No, no, think of the awful risk—alone, here in the rooms at midnight. You must not stay. Rather a thousand wrongs than you should tarnish your fair name.

MARGARET. I know Sir Geoffrey Pomfret to be a thief. I know that he will challenge you. I know that it is planned to murder you. Eric, I know you spoke the truth.

ERIC. You believe in me? Thank God for that. With your faith, I am murder-proof.

MARGARET. You must not meet him.

ERIC. Must *not* meet him?

MARGARET. You must not. Promise me you will avoid this meeting.

ERIC. No, no. He stole my work; he shall not rob me of my honor.

MARGARET. Wait until you have regained the first. Do you not see he will force this meeting to prevent your doing so?

ERIC. Why should I fear to meet him? I have lost more than life itself—and life is worthless to me now.

MARGARET. Think of my life—my life that is bound up with yours. Ah, Eric, Eric, I love you so.

ERIC. Margaret—bless you for those words, and if I live—

MARGARET. You must, you shall.

ERIC. Ah, dearest, go. Go, I entreat you. If they should return and find you here—?

MARGARET. (*Passionately*) Ah, then he has

challenged already. I will not go until you promise not to fight Sir Geoffrey.

ERIC. I cannot!

MARGARET. Eric, Eric, your life is mine.

ERIC. Yes, but honor is above our lives, and I must think of yours. Go! Go!

MARGARET. Not till you swear that you will not fight Sir Geoffrey!

ERIC. I cannot swear. Hush! They are coming. Sir Geoffrey and Captain O'Hara. Who let you in?

MARGARET. I found the door ajar.

ERIC. Then we must not be surprised. (*Looks about*) Margaret, in behind the curtains. (*Goes to curtains*) In this room! For pity sake's, quick!

MARGARET. No!

ERIC. Think, if they find you here! If you stay, your name is blasted, your honor gone.

MARGARET. Then it is my honor against yours.

ERIC. Your honor or mine?

MARGARET. Yes: your honor or mine. (*Knocking heard again, and voices*)

ERIC. Ah, no, not that. Do not put me to that cruel test. You will let me keep all I have left, my honor? Go! Go!

MARGARET. No! Not until you swear you will not fight Sir Geoffrey!

ERIC. You will not?

MARGARET. No! Eric—(*Stands silent in horror*) Let my honor go! (*MARGARET gives a swift look towards entrance L. then goes behind the curtains c. at back. CAPTAIN O'HARA's voice heard off*)

CAPT. O'HARA. (*As he raises his foot*) Eric! Eric! (*ERIC takes candlestick from mantel-piece, wipes perspiration from his forehead and goes up L. and off like a man dazed and crushed; lock shoots back. Bustling entrance of CAPTAIN O'HARA. Goes R. Enter MAJOR followed by POMFRET wrapped in cloak. MAJOR comes L. c. POMFRET goes down L. MAJOR carries swords. Enter ERIC, who stands c.*) Now then, to business.

ERIC. Gentlemen! There will be no fight.

(CAPTAIN O'HARA starts, *thunderstruck*.)

POMFRET. Coward, as well as liar!

MAJOR. (*Intervening*) Leave the word to me, Sir Geoffrey. We will accept no apology.

CAPT. O'HARA. 'S blood, Eric, we can't stand that! (ERIC stands helpless—*hanging his head*) Eric! You heard them!

ERIC. I cannot fight them!

POMFRET. Fight, damn you, you cannot crawl!

CAPT. O'HARA. Insults to my friend, while the affair is in my hands, are insults to me

ERIC. (*Stopping him*) No, Jack, no.

POMFRET. (*Goes to ERIC c.*) Has the coward no more to say? Has the liar lost his breath? If you will not fight, speak. (ERIC bows his head and clenches his hands) If you will not speak, kneel! (ERIC turns a face of misery to POMFRET) Insulting dog! Crawling hound! Cur! You dared accuse—you dared to strike! Well, then a blow. (*Striking ERIC in the face with glove*) There! (*Strikes again*) There!

(Enter MARGARET through curtains with a wild cry.)

MARGARET. Coward! Eric, kill that man!

ERIC. Ah!

(POMFRET throws off cloak L. ERIC draws sword from MAJOR, who holds them c. POMFRET at sound of MARGARET's voice has backed away L. POMFRET draws sword. They rush together and fight furiously—ERIC disarms POMFRET. PADBURY's voice heard off L. U. E. just as fight culminates. Enter LORD NEVILLE wearing cloak. He stands an instant at the head of steps.)

LORD NEVILLE. Stop! This fight goes no further, gentlemen! (LORD NEVILLE descends and goes c.)

(ALICE runs to ERIC L.)

ALICE. Eric! Mr. Padbury brought me here!

POMFRET. In good time, my lord, to take home your daughter, whom I found in this man's rooms at midnight.

LORD NEVILLE. (c.) Silence, sir! You are speaking of my daughter. Mr. Temple, what of this charge you made to-night?

ERIC. My lord, it was not "Hilebrand" you heard to-night, but my stolen opera "King Lear."

LORD NEVILLE. I know it, sir. (To POMFRET) Your confederate confessed in his cups to-night: the messenger who innocently aided the thief has been found. The proof is complete.

PADBURY Yes, Eric. I told his lordship all about it. (MAJOR is sneaking to door) Ah, Major, don't be in a hurry.

MAJOR. Excuse me. I've got an important engagement in Lambeth. (Exits L. U. E.)

POMFRET. (Crosses R.) All this sounds most ingenious, but you have not a particle of proof. No one can dispute my authorship of "Hildebrand."

MARGARET. (Comes down L. of c.) Yes: I can!

POMFRET. What, you, Miss Neville? Do you dispute it to?

MARGARET. Yes! Mr. Temple's song of "Heartsease" is in the final act of "Hildebrand." I heard it. I knew it to-night.

POMFRET. A mere coincidence.

MARGARET. Too exact for that: it was note for note.

ERIC. Yes, Alice it was there, the same melody, the same harmony. You see, my lord, I stole my best to give to her.

LORD NEVILLE. Mr. Temple, I thank you, but if

you have been wronged, as I most firmly believe, neither my name, Lady Neville's, nor yours, Sir Geoffrey, shall be spared in the investigation.

POMFRET. Your lordship seems to threaten.

LORD NEVILLE. Sir Geoffrey, it is you who seem to fear, but where I have done wrong, there will I set right.

POMFRET. (*Winges, but assumes bold front*) It is positive charity to assume that his lordship is in his dotage.

LORD NEVILLE. (*Going up*) Go to the devil! (POMFRET goes up. PADBURY hands him in succession, his cloak, sword, hat and gloves, each with a bow) Your cloak, your sword, your gloves, and your hat. Don't hurry.

POMFRET. (*On steps*) I always told your lordship that you would have all Cheapside in the family. (*Exits, followed by PADBURY L. U. E.*)

LORD NEVILLE. Mr. Temple, how can I ever repair the wrong I have done you?

ERIC. My lord, the one inspiration in my work, the reward, the light, toward which I battled through the darkness—was love. When that is won, all else were well lost.

LORD NEVILLE. And Margaret?

MARGARET. You know I love him, father.

LORD NEVILLE. (*To ERIC*) Take her, sir. It was he who discovered you, after all.

(*Music of "Heartsease" heard off-stage.*)

ERIC. Real, breathing, loving. It is no dream. God does not give us more than we can bear.

MARGARET. For us, love always, love unalterable.

ERIC. Yes, and the "Heartsease" that comes with love.

CURTAIN.



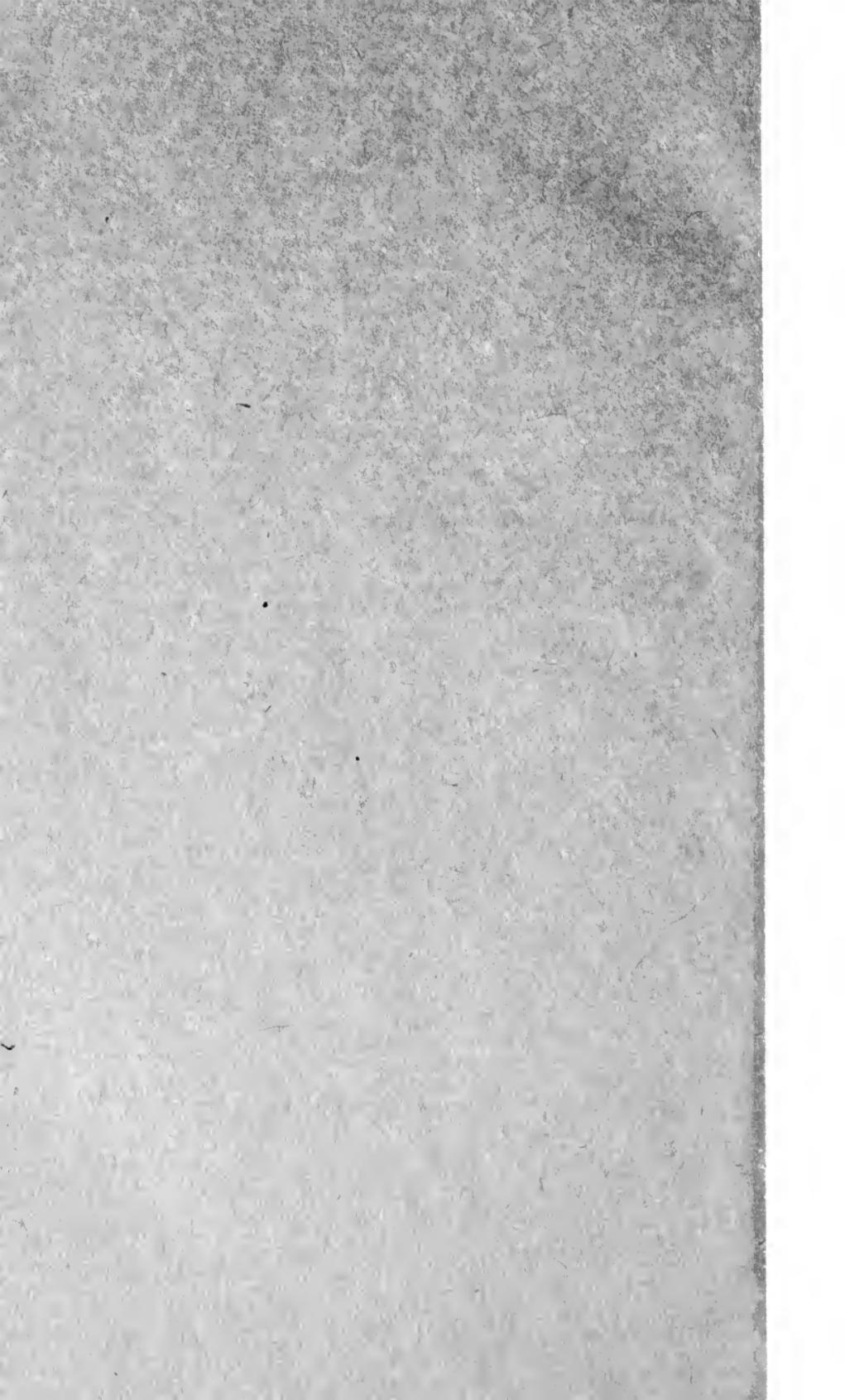


Klein, Charles
Heartsease. New York, Samuel French,
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